EAST BAY EXPRESS

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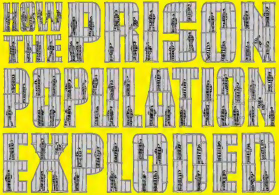

HOW THE PRISON POPULATION EXPLODED

And why the costs of housing inmates skyrocketed at the same time. By Joaquin Palomino

Cop Identified in Kayvan Sabehgi Beating? 11
Video and OPD records indicate that the veteran was beaten by an Oakland cop who has since retired.

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Far from amazing, Freehouse fills a niche for UC Berkeley students

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A new generation of movers and shakers wants to create a cohesive hip-hop scene

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Experience International House
at SpringFest - The Edith Coliver Festival of Cultures
Saturday, April 21, 2012 - 11am to 6pm
Berkeley CAL DAY
Country Focus: RUSSIA
• SF Consular Corps
• Dance & Musical Performances on 5 Stages
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On the Cover *Illustration by Brian Kelly*

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NEWS & OPINION

EAST BAY EXPRESS
Taste

LETTERS

Edgy Versus Interesting

Dear *High Times Express*. Saw your latest issue in the box — the one with the smiling Neanderthal holding the head of a murdered animal. Did not pick it up, as clearly it is not intended for me. Or for anyone else who cares about their fellow creatures on this planet. Too bad you keep shooting yourself in the foot with your frequently terrible cover art — your publication could be so much better if you did not think "edgy" means "interesting."

Stephanie Street Berkeley

How Humane Is "Humane"?

The cover photo of Aaron Lander holding a pig's head highlights the inescapable reality of eating even "humane" meat — you are still eating a dead animal that did not want to die. Farms such as Marin Sun Farms are definitely an improvement over factory farms, both in terms of the safety of the food source and animal welfare, but they do not solve the environmental or ethical problems that come with eating animals.

First, at the rate Americans eat meat, there is simply not enough land to raise the nation's meat this way, even if factory farms went out of business. Second, raising cows and pigs for food still relies on large amounts of land and water for the feeding of the animals, the disposal of waste, and the packing process. Third, and most important to me, even pasture-raised animals endure the same slaughter practices as factory-farmed animals.

They are sent to the same local USDA slaughterhouses as factory farmed animals, where both workers and animals are exposed to horrors that have been amply documented, including animals being cut, skinned, or boiled while still conscious; being physically forced to the slaughter line; and being subject to outright sadistic abuse by workers overwhelmed and traumatized by the rate at which they must kill on a fast assembly line. (Although the USDA standards make attempts to lessen the frequency of these occurrences, undercover film footage as well as worker interviews suggest these atrocities are not isolated incidents.)

After I learned about the realities of factory farming, I was initially excited to learn about the "certified humane" label, which is meant to ensure that animals are treated decently during both life and the slaughter process. This is a noble goal that, like the efforts of Marin Sun Farms, gives animals a much better life than they would have in a factory farm.

But when I read the actual details of what this means for slaughter — for instance, that in the more "humane" process a cow is stunned a second or third time if and when it becomes conscious while having its artery cut or even being skinned — that was enough for me. I believe that people are drawn to pasture-raised sources of meat because they have a natural desire to not only protect their health, but to not harm animals. But there is no way to eat animals without being part of a process that is inherently violent and sad. When you eat a plate of bacon (and I loved bacon as much as the next gal), ask yourself if you could do it with the pig's head Aaron is holding watching you, and if you really need it enough to demand that frightened animals death.

Amy Walthall Richmond

Pig Porn

While it's certainly incumbent on those of us living with the moral ambiguity of eating meat to ensure that the meat in question comes from animals that at least had decent lives while they were alive, that is one pervy photo.

Mary Eisenhart Oakland

Extremely Insensitive

Both the article and accompanying photo are indicative of extremely insensitive individuals who are trying to justify their need/lust/greed/attachment for having innocent animals killed so they can eat meat. The author and individuals quoted in this article are contributing to the control, abuse, violence, and premature death of social animals.

These innocent animals have rights, feelings, and families and are not meant for human consumption. Humans do not need meat to meet our nutritional needs. If carnivores and omnivores are open minded, knowledgeable, resourceful, and creative, they can easily enjoy nutritious and tasty vegan food and will not miss eating meat.

Please contemplate what it would be like if another species killed and ate humans. Please do not allow your newspaper to perpetrate violence toward animals, and encourage everyone to treat animals with respect and kindness.

Suzanne Gallo Oakland

Get Educated

It's very easy to write off any ethical side of supporting the meat business by throwing out "murder" as a reason not to. Why don't you actually learn about the sustainable farming and consumption of pasture-raised animals before you stand tall with your opinion?

Mario Lopez
Employee, The Local Butcher Shop

Sickened

I was sickened to see a smiling young man holding a dead pig's head on this week's cover of *the Express*. The editors seem to have a strange idea of what is appealing to your readers. I certainly hope you will use more thought and sensitivity with future covers.

Judith Gottesman Berkeley

In Poor Taste

This cover was in extremely poor taste (no pun intended). Granted, there are those who enjoy eating dead animals, but to show that kind of photo on the front page — or anywhere — does no justice for the animal who was slaughtered and butchered for meat-eaters' enjoyment.

Richard Rose Oakland

We're All Connected

After having a fabulous vegan dinner at Souley Vegan, the up-and-coming vegan spot in Oakland, I grabbed a copy of the *Express*. As I walked out into the fresh air on a beautiful spring night, I was horrified to see a picture of a young man holding the head of a pig. I wasn't quite sure what the picture was trying to convey, but seeing the head of this most beautiful pig in the arms of the young man, I was devastated. How come it's so difficult for us to understand that these beings are no different from us, and certainly no different from the animals that we love and care for? I guess it just takes time for all of us to realize that we are totally connected to each other. Each of us is realizing this at different moments.

Radha Leong Pleasant Hill

Turning the Tables

Now that I realize how much the public values sustainability and humanity in their meat-eating choices, I have another solution to that of Marin Sun Farms. We could take all the unwanted dogs, cats, and horses at our local rescue organizations and eat them. They are just going to be euthanized anyway, right? We can load them onto a big truck, drive them to a local USDA approved slaughterhouse, herd them into a line, and then restrain and stun them with a bolt to the head before they are hung upside down to have their artery cut and then be skinned. If all goes well, they won't feel a thing. If not, well, they'll eventually die in the process. And most of these animals got to live more than six months, so they probably had a good life with freedom to roam before we "harvested" them. Inhumane and horrific, you say? Cows and pigs are sentient beings, like dogs and cats. They feel affection, sadness — and terror

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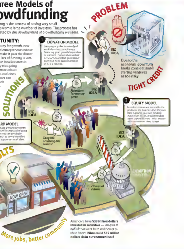
Three Models of Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is the process of raising very small investments from a large number of investors. The process has been facilitated by the development of crowdfunding websites.

OPPORTUNITY:
The opportunity for growth, new start ups and entrepreneurs whose ideas never make it past the dinner table due to lack of funding is vast. The impact on local business is undoubtedly also going to produce more robust communities and cities where investors can now keep their money local.


PROBLEM
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BIZ IDEA
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SOLUTIONS
No return for money given
BIZ IDEA
BIZ IDEA
Tangible or intangible reward
BIZ IDEA
EXEMPTION GRANTED
Financial return
RESULTS
Main Street
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More jobs, better community

1 DONATION MODEL
Campaigns gather hundreds of small donations to achieve a financing goal, growth/expansion or start ups. Donors choose their selection and feel good about contributing to an economic or artistic endeavors.

2 REWARD MODEL
Supporters make a monetary contribution in return for a reward of some sort. The rewards can be wholly intangible such as being identified publicly as a supporter or a T shirt.

3 EQUITY MODEL
Investors receive an interest in the profits of the business that they are helping fund. A crowd funding exemption to SEC regulations has been signed into law. What impact will this have on Main Street

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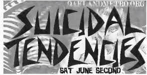

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EAST BAY EXPRESS

at a violent death. Just because our culture endorses eating one animal while keeping another as a pet doesn't make it right.

Milena Esherick, Berkeley

Meat Is Murder

I live on plants and believe that there are also many vegetarians and vegans who are not "flocking" to pasture-raised animals. No matter how "nice" a life these beings had, most still meet their fate at an industrial slaughterhouse. And even if they are "farm-killed," they sure didn't want to die then either. The act is still violent and unnecessary. Stop trying to prettify up the picture about killing innocent victims. There are plenty of better choices that don't demand we take anyone's life.

Ben Elliott, Winter Haven, Florida

A Voice for Vegans

I've been a big fan of Colleen Patrick-Goudreau since I discovered her podcast a few years ago. She has a unique way of presenting the compelling reasons for being vegan without being hostile or judgmental. I have learned so much from her about animals, food, and compassionate living that she has truly changed my life. I strongly encourage everyone — whether you are vegan, omnivore, or anywhere in between — to go see her presentation.

Steve Small, Frederick, Maryland

Whiplash in the Movie Theater

Ow, thanks for spoiling one of the few plot points in the film. Two: I would say *The Raid* was the best action flick since *Hard Boiled*. This film makes you want to get a Kevlar neck protector.

Ryan Richards, Minneapolis

Get Your Genres Right

I think you all should get more knowledgeable music critics to review CDs in the *Express*! At the least, I would expect the writer to get the genre of music correct for the record that she is reviewing. Howell Devine is far from a "twangy country band." We are a blues band through and through. I think ten out of ten school kids would have known that after one listening of the CD. Rachel Swan can say anything she wants about the CDs she reviews, and that is fair enough, for music is very subjective to each individual listener — but girl, you gotta learn the basics of musicology, so you will know what kind of music you are listening to!

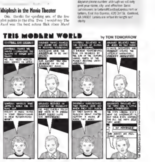
Pete Devine
Drummer, Howell Devine

Corrections

In our April 4 cover story, "The Shrinking Stage," we misstated the number of Equity actors Shotgun Players is hiring this season: It's fifteen. In the same article, we incorrectly stated that Marin Theatre Company's Sasha Hnatkovitch is a woman. ●

Letters Policy

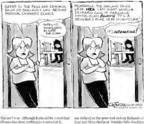
Please provide your full name, address, and daytime phone number, although we will only print your name, city, and affiliation. Send submissions to Letters@EastBayExpress.com or Letters, East Bay Express, 620 3rd St., Oakland, CA 94607. Letters are edited for length and clarity.



THE BAD US ATTORNEY

Melinda Haag has got to go. Plus Oakland hills residents freak out again over burglaries

By Robert Gammon


GREAT. SO THE FEDS ARE CRACKING DOWN ON OAKLAND'S LAW ABIDING MEDICAL CANNABIS CLINICS.
HURRY UP HONEY, YOU'LL BE LATE FOR SCHOOL
MEANWHILE THE OAKLAND POLICE WERE MIA LAST NIGHT WHEN A DEPRAVED GANG OF MARAUDING HOODIE-CLAD BANDITS TP'D A NEIGHBOR'S HOME HERE IN MONTCLAIR!
IT'S OUTRAGEOUS!
DeFREITAS EAST BAY EXPRESS

Melinda Haag has turned out to be the most reactionary US attorney in Northern California in a long time. Her wrongheaded crackdown on medical cannabis shows her complete disregard for the voters of California, and her role in the massive federal raid on Oaksterdam and the respected businesses and properties of **Richard Lee** in Oakland last week were totally out of bounds. Lee's legitimate businesses are a model in Oakland. They pay their taxes, they operate cleanly and safely, and they've helped lead the sweeping revitalization of Oakland's once-barren Uptown district. Indeed, Haag's role in targeting Lee was so uncalled for, it proves she's not fit for office. President **Barack Obama** and Attorney General **Eric Holder** should replace her.

However, because of politics and the 2012 presidential campaign, the Obama administration will undoubtedly leave Haag in place — at least for now. And to a certain extent, that's understandable. Firing a US attorney over medical pot would be a gift to Republicans in an important election year.

Haag, in fact, seems to understand the politics involved — and it may explain her brazen actions. She has to know that there's little chance the White House will move against her. She may even be positioning herself for the possibility of a **Mitt Romney** White House because, at this point, her stance on medical weed is more reactionary than that of her predecessor — **Joseph Russoniello**, a Bush administration appointee.

Lots of people, however, believe that Haag actually has Obama's blessing and is doing his bidding. After all, the other three US attorneys in California are also participating in the federal crackdown. The theory is that Obama believes the crackdown will help him with independent voters in other states. We hope that isn't true, although it should be noted that Obama has done nothing to contradict it.

In fact, the silence from national Democratic leaders has been deafening. California Senators **Dianne Feinstein** and **Barbara Boxer**, along with House Democratic Minority Leader **Nancy Pelosi**, have been overwhelmingly tight-lipped about the crackdown, even though it totally contradicts the will of California voters who have repeatedly endorsed the use and sale of medical cannabis. The absence of leadership among Democrats on this issue has been stunning.

Here's hoping that Obama begins to show some leadership — and lives up to the past promises he made to not interfere with medical marijuana in states that had approved its sale and use. And that he replaces Haag no later than November 7 — the day after he wins reelection.

The Freak Out Over Burglaries

Every few years, wealthy residents of the relatively safe and quiet Oakland hills have a mass freak-out over crime. Usually, it's prompted by a rash of burglaries. And typically, hills residents complain that the city directs too many of its scarce police resources (and their tax dollars) to the poor and violent flatlands of East and West Oakland. Wealthy hills-dwellers usually contend that their needs are not being met. Well, residents of the hills and the Lazy Rockridge district are complaining about a rise in burglaries again, and they're blaming Mayor **Jean Quan**'s 100 Block crime plan because it focuses on the city's most violent neighborhoods.

The only problem is that Quan's plan appears to have nothing to do with the recent rise in burglaries in wealthy neighborhoods and the lack of police to patrol those areas. Instead, the fewer number of cops patrolling the hills can be traced to a decision early last year by then-Police Chief **Anthony Batts** to direct more police resources to East and West Oakland. Batts' move was prompted by a 2010 decision by the Oakland City Council (of which Quan was then a member) to slash the size of OPD. The layoffs were caused by a substantial reduction in city tax revenues and the police union's refusal at the time to pay into its pension plan.

Batts reasoned that with fewer police officers available, he needed to focus them on the city's crime-ridden areas. He reduced the number of so-called problem-solving beats — of which individual officers focused solely on neighborhood crime issues, such as burglaries — from 57 to 35. And he consolidated beats mostly in the hills so that the wealthy neighborhoods would no longer have their own officer dedicated solely to their needs. Instead, they would have to share with other well-to-do neighborhoods.

Current Police Chief **Howard Jordan** continued with Batts' realignment plan after Oakland residents rejected a parcel tax measure last fall that would have allowed the city to hire more cops. Although hills residents complained about Batts' realignment, it made sense fiscally and morally. It's impossible to justify having police officers patrolling the hills in search of burglars, or assigning an officer to solely work in areas with relatively little crime, when entire swaths of the flatlands are plagued by some of the worst crime in the nation.

As for the 100 Block plan, Quan is financing it partially through grants the city received to combat the high-crime rates in East and West Oakland. For example, the city won a $10.7 million federal grant last year to hire 25 police officers to patrol violent neighborhoods around five middle schools. As such, those officers — and the funds used to hire and pay them — cannot legally be used in the hills.

That being said, it's remains unclear whether the 100 Block plan will work. The reason is that it appears to subscribe to the security-guard approach to policing — that putting more police officers in certain "hot spots" will reduce crime in those areas. However, the evidence as to whether such plans actually work is less than conclusive. These plans operate on the assumption that criminals tend to be dissuaded from committing crimes if a cop car drives by every once and a while.

In reality, Oakland's violent crime problems have historically centered on heavily armed drug gangs battling over turf. It's hard to see how having more cops on patrol is going to affect that dynamic. In fact, violent crime is up so far this year citywide.

Nonetheless, it's too soon to reach a definitive verdict on the 100 Block plan. It hasn't been in effect that long, as the police department was busy during much of late-2011 and early-2012 responding to Occupy Oakland. The 100 Block plan deserves a chance to succeed — at least a few more months. However, if violent crime is still on the rise at the time, then Quan, Jordan, and City Administrator **Deanna Santana** should rethink the strategy. ●

Seven Days is culled from our news blog, 92510.

Robert.Gammon@EastBayExpress.com

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LEGALIZATION NATION

WEED'S GROWING PAINS

Cheech & Chong are senior citizens. It's high time for a more mature cannabis culture, say organizers of the Deep Green Festival.

By David Downs

While the Bay Area smolders in the aftermath of the April 2 federal raid on Oaksterdam University, thousands of the medical cannabis and hemp industry's best and brightest are regrouping to discuss the road ahead on April 21.

The second annual Deep Green Festival will take place at Richmond's Craneway Pavilion the day after 4/20, bringing together an A-list of political, medical, industrial and nutritional cannabis leaders, led in part by budding *Weed Wars* celebrity Stephen DeAngelo, founder of Harborside Health Center in Oakland.

Dozens of California canna-businesses — from dispensaries to manufacturers of pot edibles, hemp product sellers, and cultivation experts — will have expo booths alongside a day's worth of entertainment, public speakers and, of course, a vapor lounge and Prop 215 area. Advance tickets are $15 for the public.

Access to the festival plus a private day-long series of industry panels costs $60. And the experts have plenty to dive into.

Oaksterdam owner Richard Lee has said the Internal Revenue Service is pursuing him for taking ordinary business deductions on the operation of his city-permitted Oakland dispensary, Coffeeshop Blue Sky. A 1980s-era law bans "drug trafficking organizations" from taking routine business deductions, and it's roughly doubling the federal taxes that dispensaries must now pay.

Harborside Health Center and San Francisco's The Vapor Room are battling the IRS over the same issue. Harborside's tax attorney, Henry Wykowski, said he represents about two dozen dispensaries that are being audited by the IRS.

In addition, some dispensaries are making less-than-desirable agreements with the IRS to settle their tax issues — a move that is "saddling the rest of us with those bad precedents," DeAngelo said. He's leading a national reform campaign that uses seminars to educate dispensary operators on their tax liabilities and how to fight the IRS.

Those IRS audits, combined with property forfeiture threats, bank account closures, and a lack of credit, have hobbled dispensaries over the last year, said DeAngelo, who will sit on a legalization panel at the Deep Green Festival with leading cannabis lawyers William Panzer and Patrick Goggin, along with union organizer Dan Rush.

At the same time, 2012 has officially become a year of lost opportunities for marijuana law reform at the ballot box. A half-dozen initiatives failed to gather enough signatures to even qualify by their April deadlines.

The multi-frontal federal assault helped hobble legalization efforts in 2012, DeAngelo said. "We've been very busy fighting a defensive campaign for several months. It seriously impacts our ability to run these initiatives," he said.

Legalization groups are looking to the midterms of 2014, but another vote on more cannabis law reform might not materialize until 2016.

"I thought after Prop 19 in 2010 that it might happen in a year or two," said Larry Bedard of the California Medical Association marijuana task force. "I believe it'll take longer now."

The California Medical Association made headlines in October when the 35,000-strong physicians lobby called for the legalization of cannabis for adult use. The public health costs of failed prohibition are too severe, the CMA stated.

Bedard was instrumental in the CMA's decision, and will sit on a cannabis medicine panel with UC Berkeley's Amanda Reiman, Robert Martin from lab CW Analytical, and Martin Lee, cofounder of Project CBD.

More and more patients are discovering the medical uses of the drug, even as the federal government prevents research on the benefits of smoking, vaporizing, or eating it, Reiman said. Berkeley Patients Group and others are conducting patient surveys to empirically record experiences, she said.

The discovery, isolation, and use of cannabis molecule cannabidiol, or CBD, to treat epilepsy and other disorders also presage an era of new therapies, Bedard said.

"We've only seen the tip of the iceberg in terms of the benefits and the value in the plant," he said. "I think the lack of regulation in California does not promote the research and science that is necessary."

Cannabis labs that identify CBD have advanced rapidly over the last three years, but too many products are going untested and the federal crackdown is slowing efforts to increase safety for all Californians, said Robert Martin of the Association of California Cannabis Labs. Some flowers and edibles still fail basic safety tests and quality assurance standards. Edibles usually lack tamper-proof packaging, expiration dates, and dosage guidelines.

"We find e.coli in hash," he said. "We're seeing pseudomonas aeruginosa, a bacteria that's found in filth." More and more patients, as a result, are demanding testing, said Martin. He praised the City of Richmond for mandating it.

Deep Green's ethos aims to counter negative stoner stereotypes with fact and maturity, said DeAngelo. He said he has grown weary of the typical Hempcon-style event with its copious paraphernalia, booth babes, and $50 doctor visits.

"I see Deep Green as part of ongoing efforts to create a more mature and responsible picture of cannabis culture," DeAngelo said.

"I embrace that. I think we need to have a more professional approach," Martin agreed.

"A lot of cannabis culture has been stoner culture. Ever since cannabis became popular in the Sixties and Seventies there's been this association with youth and youth culture," DeAngelo said. "That's a fallacy now. I'm 53 years old. I feel like Deep Green is part of the maturation of cannabis culture." ●

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This column is culled from our blog of the same name.

Most plastics that arrive at Berkeley's MRF end up in the landfill.

Stephen Loewinsohn

ECO WATCH

BERKELEY SOFTENS PLASTICS POSITION

The city is taking its first steps toward recycling mixed plastics.

By Nate Seltenrich

If there's one thing you can say about recycling plastics today, it's that it's never easy. There are no simple answers, no clear-cut paths, no defined right or wrong. And out of all the cities in the recycling-crazy Bay Area, no city has struggled with the implications of this as much as Berkeley. Whereas just five months ago representatives of the city and its partners were defending the decision to rebuff prevailing trends and keep mixed plastics out of the recycling stream (see "The Plastic Problem" 11/9/11), Berkeley is now taking its first tentative step toward welcoming them into the fold. Still, there's no telling where it will lead.

In late March, Community Conservation Centers, the nonprofit organization that operates Berkeley's materials recovery facility or MRF (pronounced "merf"), announced it had received an $85,000 matching grant from StopWaste.org to upgrade its small, outdated facility. The work, which according to General Manager Jeff Belchamber should be complete in early June, will improve overall efficiency and enable better sorting of glass, thereby saving tens of thousands of dollars a year; no controversy there.

But the addition of new conveyor belts, hand-sorting positions, and storage bays and bins at the facility will also allow Berkeley, for the first time ever, to begin to process a range of mixed rigid plastics for recycling. And this is where things get complicated.

For instance: Which plastics? How many? From whom? Where will they go? And how much will it all cost? No one yet knows the answers to any of these questions, including Belchamber himself, who wrote the grant application back in December, after we published our story about Berkeley's conundrum.

"We're working with our markets to find out exactly what materials they'll accept, and what materials we can handle," Belchamber said. He's also doing research into the economics of handling these new plastics, which may include the likes of yogurt cups, laundry detergent jugs, and other non-bottle plastic containers. One of the primary challenges of handling mixed plastics is that it's often a profit-losing enterprise: the price of capturing, bundling, and transporting them — even overseas to China in empty shipping containers leaving Oakland's port — typically exceeds the price paid by recyclers. Recycling of plastic bottles, which Berkeley has done since 2000, is subsidized by the state through redemption values.

Late last year, Berkeley touted a six-month pilot program to deliver number-five plastics to Mill Valley company Green Toys, avoiding the significant labor and environmental hazards associated with sending plastics, electronic waste, and other refuse overseas. However, the program has since been discontinued because trucking the materials to a Southern California processor proved to be considerably more expensive than shipping them all the way across the Pacific. Thus, any new plastics that the Berkeley facility begins bundling and marketing are apt to end up overseas, for now at least.

Even so, there could be significant costs. "I'm confident that there are markets for it," Belchamber said. "I'm not confident that it'll pay for itself."

Ken Etherington, head of Berkeley's Solid Waste Division, suggested that the cost of handling the new materials could be offset by concurrent improvements in efficiency and glass sorting. "But that's to be seen," he said.

As for who would foot the bill? Another unknown. Etherington noted that any new operating costs would have to be addressed at the city council level and could ultimately be passed along to ratepayers. Berkeley's refuse rates are already among the highest in Alameda County.

And there's yet another twist. Despite the best efforts of the Ecology Center, the nonprofit that provides curbside collection services to the city and helps educate residents on what they can and can't recycle, many unwanted non-bottle plastics still end up in Berkeley's MRF. Those that do are dispatched to local landfills. At minimum, upgrades to the recycling facility will finally allow these "residual" plastics — about two hundred tons a year, Belchamber estimates — to be recycled instead of landfilled.

Yet this is just a sliver of the nearly 10,000 tons of plastic landfilled by Berkeley every year, according to a 2008 StopWaste.org audit. And there's no guarantee that the city will be ready or even willing to improve its diversion rate by collecting mixed plastics any time soon.

Ecology Center Executive Director Martin Bourque said that studies will need to be undertaken to determine what volume and types of plastic could be added to the recycling stream, whether the Ecology Center has the capacity to handle it — especially given an impending transition to single-driver routes — and what the expense of doing so would be. The vetting process could take up to two years, Bourque said.

Stepping out of the weeds of balance sheets and tonnage capacities, the questions get even tougher. Bourque is a bit bearish on the whole concept of plastic recycling, and so are some Berkeleyans — a force the city's gung-ho Zero Waste Commission will have to face when (or if) it decides to bring the issue to the public forum.

The concern, Bourque said, is that recycling doesn't actually address the most serious problems associated with plastic, including toxicity and pollution, and could incentivize consumers to use more plastic. "We don't think that we can solve the problem with plastics simply by recycling," he said. "It makes people think that we've solved the problem, and really all we've done is move them from the gray bin to the blue bin."

That's precisely why some members of Berkeley's well-educated, fiercely green ranks may ardently oppose the notion of expanding plastics recycling. Bourque lists off a number of alternative approaches that he believes should at the very least be used in tandem with recycling: expanding producer responsibility for consumer packaging, banning certain plastics, developing local markets for recyclable plastics, and perhaps most importantly, reducing our consumption of plastics.

Bourque and other solid waste professionals also argue that tackling plastics is by some measures a low priority. "There are still much bigger and more valuable parts of our waste stream that need attention, like recyclable paper and compostable discards," he said. Culling these biodegradable materials from landfills can also offer significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The bottom line, however, is that the city is under significant pressure to expand its plastic-recycling infrastructure. Many residents are demanding it, especially after watching neighbors like Oakland and El Cerrito grow their programs in recent years. And Berkeley's Zero Waste Commission, charged with steering the city toward zero waste by 2020, a mere eight years away, needs every chance it can get to stop materials from leaving Berkeley for a landfill.

What remains to be seen is whether Berkeley leadership, residents, and recycling partners can reach a consensus on plastics, and whether they can agree upon a sustainable way to pay for it. Otherwise, Berkeley's first steps toward recycling mixed plastics may also be its last. ●

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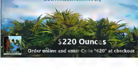

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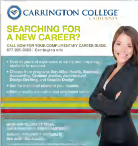
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FULL DISCLOSURE

RANKED-CHOICE VOTING ATTACKED IN OAKLAND

A group with ties to Don Perata's campaign manager launches initiative to overturn instant-runoff voting.

By Robert Gammon

Ex-state Senator Don Perata and his campaign manager Larry Tramutola were flummoxed by ranked-choice voting in the 2010 Oakland mayor's race. After losing to Jean Quan, Perata said he didn't "understand" how to run a campaign with Oakland's new voting system. And before the campaign got underway, Perata launched a behind-the-scenes effort to block ranked-choice voting from being used. Now, seventeen months after losing the election, one of Tramutola's disciples is spearheading a ballot-measure drive to get rid of ranked-choice voting in Oakland. The group plans to gather signatures to put its anti-ranked-choice measure on the November ballot.

The group, which is calling itself Moving Oakland Forward and is run by Melquis Naveo, a graduate of Tramutola's local leadership academy, is proposing to reinstate Oakland's old voting system. If the measure passes, Oakland would return to having a June primary with the top-two finishers facing each other in a November runoff — unless one of the candidates gets a majority of the votes cast in the June election.

Naveo said in an interview that the group plans to use volunteer signature-gatherers to qualify for the ballot. According to official papers filed with the Oakland City Clerk's Office, Tramutola was identified as a principal officer of the group. Naveo said that Tramutola, who is perhaps the best-known campaign manager in Oakland, had helped him launch the group but is no longer involved in day-to-day operations.

Naveo's group, meanwhile, could face a difficult road. Oaklanders overwhelmingly voted in 2006 to adopt ranked-choice voting, also known as instant runoff voting or IRV (Measure O received 69 percent of the vote). And ranked-choice supporters, including the Oakland League of Women Voters, are expected to strongly oppose the new anti-IRV measure. "It's disappointing," longtime Oakland activist Judy Cox said of the anti-ranked-choice petition. Cox said that, as an election observer in 2010, she found that "most people seemed to feel pretty good about ranked-choice voting."

But Naveo argued that Oaklanders and residents of other cities that have adopted ranked-choice voting now have "buyer's remorse." "A lot of people don't feel comfortable with it after they've used it," he contended.

He also argued that some precincts in Oakland exhibited "high error rates" on their ballots, suggesting that some voters were disenfranchised by the voting system. Some precincts experienced "error" rates of up to 10 percent, he said. But Naveo acknowledged that these "error" rates included ballots on which voters made only one choice in the election. As a result, those ballots didn't really contain "errors" and were perfectly valid ballots that were counted like all the others.

It's a common — and specious — argument made by opponents of ranked-choice voting: that when voters choose one candidate, instead of ranking their top three, then they must have been "confused" by the system and made "errors." But there's no evidence to back up such claims. After all, voters may have decided to vote for one person (which they're allowed to do) because that candidate was the only one they liked in the election. In fact, when excluding ballots in which voters picked just one candidate, the actual error rate for ballots cast in the 2010 Oakland mayor's race was only about 1 percent.

Moreover, in 2010 Perata openly encouraged his supporters to just put his name on the ballot. Another candidate, Terence Candell, did the same. As a result, voters who only selected one candidate on their ballots may have just been following their candidates' wishes.

The anti-ranked-choice-voting argument also contains a bit of racism. In early 2011, opponents of the voting system contended that poor black voters were "disenfranchised" by IRV because they didn't "understand" it. But the only evidence to back up this allegation was ballots cast in deep East Oakland precincts in which some voters chose a single candidate. "I think that charge in particular [that people didn't understand IRV] has no basis in fact," Cox said. "I think it was an attempt to bring forward a racist tinge to the issue."

Another common argument against ranked-choice voting in Oakland is that about 11 percent of voters were "disenfranchised" because they did not list either Quan or Perata, the top-two finishers, on their ballots. Opponents, as a result, contend that Quan didn't win a majority.

In truth, however, ranked-choice voting *enfranchised* thousands of Oakland voters in comparison to the last mayor's race. That's because ranked-choice voting avoids a June primary, when fewer people tend to vote, and consists of one election in November. In November 2010, 119,607 Oakland voters cast ballots for mayor. But in the June 2006 primary, in which Ron Dellums won a majority of the votes, only 83,891 ballots were cast.

In other words, ranked-choice voting led to 35,716 more people voting in 2010 than four years earlier. Ranked-choice voting is also cheaper for Oakland taxpayers because a June primary typically costs the city about $1 million.

Still another argument proffered by Naveo's group is that ranked-choice voting results in more negative campaigning. But historically, the opposite has been true. Candidates in IRV elections are less likely to attack each other for fear of angering their opponents' supporters, who then won't list them on their ballots.

Likewise, the 2010 Oakland mayor's race consisted of mostly positive campaigning. The only exceptions were Quan's attacks on Perata, and negative ads run against Quan and fellow candidate Rebecca Kaplan by a group funded by Perata's supporters and his employer — the California prison guards union.

Finally, Naveo said that his group also is spearheading a second ballot measure proposal that would implement term limits on the Oakland City Council. Tramutola also has backed this proposal; it would limit councilmembers to three terms or twelve years on the council. ●

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Frank Uu was a member of OPD's tight-knit Tango teams

Al Winston

NEWS

COP IDENTIFIED IN KAYVAN SABEHGI BEATING?

Video and OPD records indicate that the military veteran was savagely beaten on November 2 by an Oakland cop who has since retired from the force.

By Al Winston

Downtown Oakland was flooded with people on the evening of November 2. Tens of thousands of participants in Oakland's first general strike since 1946 were trickling back to the city center after temporarily stopping operations at the Port of Oakland that afternoon. The citywide economic shutdown marked the peak of Occupy Oakland to date and provided a striking West Coast counterpoint to Occupy Wall Street.

From the early morning until mid-evening, tens of thousands of demonstrators protesting against widening economic inequality, social injustice, and police brutality had remained largely peaceful. The notable exception was a mid-afternoon anticapitalist march that saw bank windows shattered in the Uptown district and a Whole Foods supermarket defaced, as well as scuffles between some "Black Bloc" protesters and demonstrators intent on stopping vandalism and property destruction.

Throughout the day, police were conspicuously absent from the streets. Even at the height of the afternoon march, as protesters smashed in the plate-glass windows of a Bank of America branch, two California Highway Patrol motorcycle officers watched the crowd briefly from a distance before driving off. OPD records indicate that undercover cops were providing intelligence from actions throughout the day, but the department took a mostly hands-off approach to the general strike.

As the crowds made their way back from the Port of Oakland after dusk, the atmosphere palpably changed. A man and a woman crossing an intersection were struck by an irate driver of a late-model BMW. While the injured demonstrators were being helped into an ambulance, an already angry crowd was incensed by the decision of BART police to let the driver leave the scene. A block north of Occupy Oakland's camp in Frank Ogawa Plaza, an Occupy splinter group took over the foreclosed Traveler's Aid Society building for use as an organizing center. As banners were hung and people danced outside, some protesters piled debris in the street as impromptu barricades, then lit them on fire.

It was at this point that OPD decided to move in and disperse the crowd. Officers unleashed flash-bang grenades and tear gas against a mass of people as the burning trash and chemical munitions combined to create a noxious smell. For the second time in a week, the heart of Oakland turned into chaos.

And again, for the second time in eight days, an American armed forces veteran lay crumpled on an Oakland sidewalk, severely injured by riot gear-wearing police officers. Video of US Marine veteran Scott Olsen being injured on October 25 was broadcast around the world, prompting severe criticism of Oakland officials and helping provide Occupy Oakland with the political capital and impetus to successfully organize a general strike a week later.

But the injuries sustained by Kayvan Sabehgi, a 28-year-old military veteran who served in Afghanistan, were not as widely publicized as the Olsen incident, and the media narrative surrounding the general strike focused largely on the vandalism and property destruction in downtown.

Video of Sabehgi's beating at the hands of an officer from one of OPD's Tango teams — riot police armed with beanbag-loaded shotguns, flash-bang grenades, and other crowd-control munitions — surfaced two weeks after November 2 and portrays deliberate aggression by police against an unarmed, unresisting man that rivals the severity of Olsen's head wound.

The footage, taken by Neil Rivas, shows Sabehgi clad in shorts and a black T-shirt, backpedaling slowly in front of a line of riot police that were methodically advancing and chanting, "move" in unison. At one point, Sabehgi, a co-owner of Elevation 66 Brewing Company in El Cerrito, tells the officers, "I want you to know that I killed for this country." Though the lighting is poor, at one point an officer breaks ranks and shoves Sabehgi twice, yelling, "Did you hear me? I said get the fuck outta here!"

Sabehgi continues to walk backward as the officer tells him to leave. Sabehgi says something inaudible to the officer, at which point the cop grabs him, then begins to strike him on the legs and lower torso, ordering Sabehgi onto the ground.

The savage beating left Sabehgi with a ruptured spleen. According to Rachel Lederman, a National Lawyers Guild attorney who is part of a legal team helping Sabehgi, a tort claim has been filed and a full civil suit is in the works.

Freeze-frames of the video show the officer wearing a backpack emblazoned with "Tango Team." The last two digits of the officer's helmet number, "32," are also clearly visible.

While participating in crowd control and tactical operations, Oakland Police Officer Frank Uu was assigned helmet number 532, according to OPD records. All Oakland Police officers deployed during demonstrations are required to have clearly visible numbers on their helmets, part of the court-ordered revision of OPD's crowd-control policies following clashes with peaceful anti-war demonstrators at the Port of Oakland in 2003.

According to OPD's detail roster from the evening of the general strike, Uu is the only one of the officers assigned to a Tango team on November 2 with a helmet number ending in 32. Oakland police documents obtained by this reporter indicate that the officer who jumped the line on Sabehgi is no longer on the force. A log of police Vievu lapel cameras issued to OPD officers indicates that Uu retired from OPD and his camera was returned on March 1. Public Record Act requests for footage from Uu's camera have been withheld due to an ongoing investigation. Shortly after footage of Sabehgi's beating became public, OPD announced it was conducting an investigation into the incident.

"It makes you wonder if it had something to do with the misconduct," Lederman said.

OPD did not return requests for comment on Uu's retirement or the Sabehgi investigation. Barry Donelan, president of the Oakland police union, declined to comment. "I'm not gonna talk about an individual member of service. It's never going to happen," Donelan said.

Uu had been with the Oakland Police Department since the early 1990s, and, until recently, was on OPD's SWAT team and served as a firearms instructor. Uu is part of a group of tight-knit Tango team officers who have been at the heart of OPD's violent clashes with Occupy Oakland demonstrators. He was present during a May 2010 charity boxing match between OPD officers and state prison guards that devolved into a brawl, though video of the incident shows Uu trying to restrain Sergeant Roland Holmgren from fighting. During the October 25 raid on Occupy Oakland, Uu was photographed with a shotgun in hand, flanking his SWAT colleagues, Sergeant Patrick Gonzales and Officer Casey Johnson.

Court documents also identify Uu as one of the officers who fired wooden dowels and beanbag rounds during the clash between OPD and antiwar demonstrators in April 2003.

Uu was last deployed in a crowd-control action on January 7, the night of the first "Fuck the Police" march held weekly by an Occupy Oakland splinter group. ●

Additional reporting by Jacob Crawford

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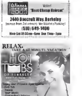

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6th Annual

Ex-con Lindsey Bolar says most inmates avoid job training and education programs because they no longer have to prove they're rehabilitated. Stephen Loewinsohn

How California's Prison Population Exploded

And why the costs of housing inmates skyrocketed at the same time.

By Joaquin Palomino

Lindsey Bolar was living in Southern California, working as a short-order cook and raising two children. It was 1987 and the strains of being a new father, paired with a long-time heroin addiction, put him in a financial bind, so he rented out a room in his apartment. But his new roommate didn't pay his rent one month, so Bolar forced him into his car and drove him to the bank. He told his roommate: "If you don't get me my rent money, I'm going to beat your ass. I'm going to break your jaw." It was a strong-armed way of collecting what he was owed; the courts called it "kidnap for ransom." Bolar was sentenced to seven years to life.

Inside Calipatria State Prison, Bolar grew angry and started dealing drugs. He used the money he made to pay for his defense lawyer. Anything left over went to support his two children and his heroin habit, which followed him behind bars. The drug dealing went on for a decade, eventually landing him a fourteen-month stay in solitary confinement and a transfer to Solano State Prison. He says the ten years of hustling behind bars left him tired. "When your family start dying, when your kids start growing up, when you start missing stuff, then reality hits you," he said. "When you in that cell sometime by yourself, reality hits you and you want to go home."

To go home, Bolar knew he needed to demonstrate to the parole board that he had changed, so he enrolled in the Offender Mentor Certification Program, which trained him and fifty other inmates to be drug rehabilitation counselors. It was a yearlong program and Bolar worked hard. "I gave up visits and studied these courses twelve hours a day, seven days a week, for a full year." The commitment paid off. He passed his exit exam and received a drug counseling certification, which meant "If I came out and Kaiser hospital was hiring, I would be in a good position to get that job," he said.

Bolar was released about a year ago — seventeen years after his minimum term expired. He was 60 years old, and had no job and no money, but thanks to that counseling certification, he's now working for Options Recovery in Berkeley. "This training makes me feel like I can do anything I want," Bolar boasted. "Even though I've got 42 years documented of criminal thinking and behavior, it's possible that a man can change."

Inmates like Bolar once was are called "lifers," referring to the sentence of life with the chance of parole. They can stay in prison indefinitely, or after a minimum number of years, a parole board can decide to let them out. It's called an indeterminate sentence and though it's now uncommon in California, it used to be the norm.

Before 1977, all California prisoners had an indeterminate sentence. They were given a range of time in which they would be imprisoned, with five years to life being a common sentence. To be freed, inmates had to prove to the parole board that they deserved it, which could mean enrolling in reform-oriented programs, learning a trade, or taking classes. The aim of indeterminate sentencing was to rehabilitate prisoners and, when they were ready to reenter society, free them.

Although the system had its flaws, it also had its successes. According to state statistics, just 25 percent of inmates released in 1977 returned to California prisons — an extraordinarily low recidivism rate in comparison to today. Nonetheless, in 1977, then-Governor Jerry Brown signed a law that completely overhauled the state's sentencing system, switching the focus from rehabilitation to punishment.

Under the Determinate Sentencing Law that Brown signed, most inmates receive a fixed sentence, and are released from prison after a specified time period. As a result, most inmates no longer need to prove to a parole board — like Bolar did — that they are ready to reenter society, and so they don't have to work for their freedom. Because of this, participation in reform-oriented prison programs has dropped substantially. "The general prison population doesn't do shit no more," Bolar noted. "No jobs, no classes, no therapeutics, no nothing — and when it's time to go home they go home."

In addition, funding for prison rehabilitation has been systemically cut from the California Department of Corrections' budget. In the 1990s, the legislature went so far as to officially change the penal code to say that the purpose of prison was punishment — period. "They took rehabilitation out of it entirely," noted UC Berkeley law professor Barry Krisberg. "So for the past three decades the system has been guided entirely by retribution. The main problem with the punitive approach is that the vast majority of prisoners are released."

And today, released inmates are much less prepared for free society. As so they usually commit new crimes and end up back in prison. According to the most recent state statistics, an astonishing 65 percent of released inmates now return to prison. In the past 25 years, that number has fluctuated between 60 and 80 percent.

At the same time, California voters and state political leaders have made it much more

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difficult for lifers to win their release. During the past three decades, California governors have routinely overturned parole-board decisions forcing prisoners to spend even more time behind bars, thereby further diminishing the role of rehabilitation.

These so-called "tough-on-crime" policies also have had other dramatic impacts. Since 1977, the number of California prisoners has increased by more than 800 percent. In 1977, prison spending accounted for just 3 percent of California's general budget. By 2010, it had jumped to 10 percent. Krisberg cites the shift more than three decades ago to determinate sentencing for the explosion of the state's prison population, and the accompanying costs.

In short, tough-on-crime policies that favored punishment over rehabilitation have led to a substantial increase in the number of repeat offenders — people who do their time without having to learn any tangible job skills or rehabilitate themselves in any way and are then released to society to commit more crimes. At the same time, the cash-strapped state has been forced to spend an increasing percentage of its scarce funds on warehousing people — rather than on basic services, such as education.

It is no wonder Brown has expressed regret for signing the Determinate Sentencing Law 35 years ago.

From the 1940s to the 1960s, California prisons were the envy of the nation. The system maintained a low recidivism rate; its wardens held advanced degrees in social work; many rehabilitation programs were mandatory, and the ones that weren't enjoyed high enrollment numbers because inmates wanted to impress their parole boards. "California was the model of good correctional management and inmate programming," said Stanford University law professor Joan Petersilia.

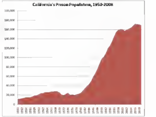
But the system also had its drawbacks, so much so that by the late 1970s there was a strong bipartisan push to dismantle indeterminate sentencing entirely. Liberals thought it wasn't transparent enough: one person might serve six months for dealing drugs and another could serve a lifetime for the same crime. Accusations of racial discrimination and favoritism flooded the courts.

Conservatives, meanwhile, attacked indeterminate sentencing, believing it produced lenient sentences. There also were accusations that the state released inmates for political and social reasons. This sparked the "truth in sentencing" movement; that is, the sentence you get in the courtroom should be the sentence you serve.

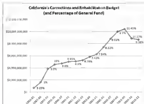
State leaders, as a result, decided to "reform" the system. While the most violent offenders — killers, rapists, and kidnappers — would still have indeterminate sentences, the majority of inmates would now face determinate sentencing. Under the latter, a judge chooses from three sentences: high, medium, and low. For example, first-degree burglary carries a base sentence of two, four, or six years in prison. Once sentenced, the inmate essentially serves exactly that amount of time in prison — minus time off for good behavior, which is granted routinely.

The determinate sentencing law also led to a massive transformation of the state penal code. The legislature was put in charge of deciding which crimes carried which sentences. "Suddenly, in this very political environment, with everybody watching, with the media there, you have elected officials who don't necessarily have training or background deciding [the scale] of penalties," Krisberg explained. The change sparked an era of tough-on-crime politics in California. "It almost became a bidding war," Krisberg added. "You know, 'I want to show that I am tougher on crime than you, so if you think a rapist should get ten years, I think he should get twenty years.' So there has been this natural escalation upwards."

This upward escalation in penalties reflected what Krisberg calls a "moral panic about crime. Voters were concerned with it. People would get defeated for office because of it. We would have statewide elections that were strictly about


California's Prison Population, 1950-2008

Source: California Department of Corrections data.



Source: California Department of Corrections data.

criminal justice sentencing."

In this frenzy between 1984 and 1994, California passed more than 1,000 crime bills. Virtually none of them reduced sentences, and many of them imposed so-called "sentence enhancements." A sentence enhancement allows a judge to tack time onto a sentence for a number of reasons. "So you could have burglary, which has a base sentence of five years," explained Robert Weisberg, the director of Stanford's Criminal Justice Center. "you could add a number of years onto that sentence for the use of a gun, the particular time of day the crime was performed, a list of priors."

There are now more than one hundred enhancements written into California's penal code, and they have greatly increased prison terms across the board. But as people serve longer and longer prison stints, they also have less and less to do behind bars.

In the last two years alone, the state has slashed rehabilitation-oriented programs by $250 million, according to the California Department of Corrections. And that comes after a thirty-year divestment in prison rehabilitation. "What's happening is they taking gangbangers off the streets," said Bolar, who spent close to three decades in California prisons. "They putting them in a prison cell but that's it! When they learn, they go right back to where they came from. They go right back to that house that's on fire. And if you think they ain't going to get burnt, you crazy."

Lifers like Bolar have much different prison experiences. Because of their indeterminate sentences, they need to work for their freedom, so they see prison psychiatrists, enroll in classes, and learn a trade — a self-imposed system of rehabilitation that seems to work. In contrast to California's high recidivism rate for most inmates, released lifers have only a 1 to 3 percent chance of returning to prison, and almost never for another violent crime, according to state statistics. Of the roughly 1,000 murderers who have been paroled over the past two decades, only 13 have re-offended, and the worst of those 13 crimes was burglary.

Bolar says lifers are forced to be model inmates, and because of tough-on-crime policies, they have to be if they want to get out. "To get a parole in California," explained UC Berkeley criminal justice expert Krisberg, "you have to demonstrate so much participation in programs, you have to have so much going for you, that to be released you practically need to be a saint."

And even that doesn't guarantee release. In 2011, just 450 of the roughly 10,000 eligible lifers in California were released — that's less than 5 percent. In 2010, it was 6 percent, and throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s, less than 1 percent of lifers won their freedom. "Life in California has come to mean life you die in prison," Krisberg said. "There's all of these prisoners that are in the last stages of life: they can't even get out of their beds. They're in no condition to cause any harm, but we still don't want to release them."

Jill Wells was one of the lifers who got stuck in California's prison system. In 1979, Wells was working at Stanford's radiology film library. He had a well-paying job and a nice home — things were stable. But it all came crashing down when one day he unintentionally killed someone — he wouldn't tell me more than that. He was sentenced to fifteen years to life for second-degree murder and sent to San Quentin.

But Wells said his transition to prison was "pretty smooth." He participated in a number of therapeutic programs, joined a Vietnam vets group, kicked a speed drug habit, and held two high-level prison jobs. He also took advantage of his leisure time: "I became a published author. I've been in famous plays. I played the part of Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*. I played the part of John Brown in *John Brown's Body*, and I just had a really, really fabulous prison experience."

Wells was eligible for release in July of 1990. He knew that no one was being freed at the time, but he thought he might be an exception. He was wrong. For 21 years, Wells was denied parole, each time for the same reason. "They would always cite the gravity of the offense, the heinousness of the crime." Wells said the parole board "never mentioned anything about public safety."

Until 2008, California parole boards were allowed to deny release based purely on the

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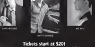

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JB Wells was denied parole for 21 years

Stephen Loewinsohn

nature of the crime. A 2010 Stanford study of parole-hearing transcripts found that for much of the past thirty years parole boards labeled nearly all offenses "heinous, vicious, or cruel." To many this made sense, but it also meant that countless inmates were kept locked up.

Routine denial of parole also blurred the lines between inmates who had committed lesser offenses and the state's most heinous criminals who were sentenced to death or life without the possibility of parole. Life with parole is supposed to be reserved for people that are considered "fixable." The minimum term limit is designed to punish and then the idea is to rehabilitate and release. "The penal code says very clearly that if you have a life sentence, you should be paroled at the first hearing," Krisberg said. "Only if [there is] something dangerous in your background should you stay in prison."

In 2008 the California Supreme Court ruled that a parole board could no longer use a lifer's original offense alone to deny parole. The court decided that it was unfair to punish prisoners indefinitely for something they could no longer change. In the wake of the decision, JB Wells was released a year ago — 21 years past his minimum parole date, at the age of 68. "I'm just so grateful to still be alive, to have hair on my head and teeth in my mouth," Wells said, holding back tears.

The Supreme Court's decision freed many lifers, but its effects were mitigated by Proposition 9, an equally momentous amendment to the state constitution known as Marsy's Law. Approved by California voters in 2008, Marsy's Law became the nation's strongest "victims' bill of rights." The law allows crime victims to speak at parole board hearings. Although this isn't a frequent occurrence, when victims do speak at hearings the odds of release drop by half, according to a 2011 academic paper, Life in Limbo, coauthored by Weisberg of the Stanford Criminal Justice Center.

Marsy's Law has also greatly increased lifers' terms in another way. When denied parole, lifers used to be able to apply again the next year, so the window of time for freedom was never too long. But under Marsy's Law, inmates denied parole have to wait at least three years until their next hearing. As a result, the incidence of three-to-five-year deferrals has doubled since 2008. Also, for the first time in California's history, thousands of lifers have received seven-to-fifteen year deferrals.

That's because Marsy's Law also can transform any disciplinary infraction into an additional five to fifteen years in prison. Krisberg said that because California prisons are so crowded, it's become nearly impossible for inmates to stay out of trouble. "I mean in the course of a day or a week, you are pretty likely to defend your life, to get into scuffles with people. And if you're a lifer, that's going to lead to more time added on to your sentence."

The biggest roadblock to freedom for lifers, though, may be Proposition 89. Passed in 1988, it made California one of only four states to allow governors to overturn parole-board decisions. So if someone were lucky enough to be found suitable for release by the board, the governor could — and typically would — override the decision, keeping that person behind bars.

In the past twelve years, California governors have reversed 60 to 98 percent of parole board decisions, according to state data. (In the latest term, Brown has only reversed 20 percent, but because of Marsy's Law only around 5 percent of eligible lifers have been freed on his watch.) "The politics of this is that if you are the governor and you release somebody and that person commits a crime, it's going to be thrown in your face in the next election," Krisberg explained.

He recalled the infamous 1988 presidential campaign, when supporters of GOP presidential candidate George H.W. Bush ran ads against Democratic challenger Michael Dukakis, after the Massachusetts governor had presided over a weekend furlough of Willie Horton, a convicted murderer. While free, Horton raped a woman after pistol-whipping, knifing, binding, and gagging her fiancé. The ads effectively killed Dukakis' presidential bid and changed the politics of criminal justice nationwide. "A lot of governors saw that and said, 'That's not going to happen on my watch,'" Krisberg said. "It became irresistible for governors to not parole anyone." As a result, tens of thousands of inmates have remained incarcerated far past their minimum terms.

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Tony Cyprien was one of them. Since the age of thirteen, Cyprien hadn't seen a solid year of freedom. After three years in youth lock-ups, Cyprien's mother suddenly died when he was sixteen and he met his father for the first time at the funeral. He was essentially on his own, but he found kinship in the notorious Crips gang. They became his family, and the most common way he showed his love was through violence. "I was always feeling anger," Cyprien remembered. "Either because something happened to me, or on behalf of one of my homies. I was always out for revenge, always ready to ride."

At seventeen, Cyprien shot and killed a rival gang member. It was a harsh crime and he received a harsh sentence — 25 years to life, to be served at Solano State Prison. "I didn't think about the concept of freedom," Cyprien remembered. "I just accepted that this could be the rest of my life — walking yards, talking to other men."

During his time at Solano, Cyprien saw the effects of determinate sentencing and the revolving door of reoffenders. "Because they had no incentive to change, people would fall back into their old ways of thinking," he said. "Prisoners would leave thinking, 'Man, I figured out what I did wrong. I should have zigged when I zagged. I ain't going to get busted the next time.' But they'd keep coming back to the pen — in and out, in and out — because they never learned about themselves."

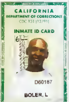
But as a lifer, Cyprien knew he had to learn about himself. To get out, he had to completely transform. He attended self-help and religious groups, anger management classes, and became a certified welder. "They call them 'tools to work with,'" he said, "and I picked up as many tools as I could to survive in this free world."

Cyprien made so much progress that he was granted parole in 2009 at his first hearing — an almost unheard-of feat. He was over forty, and overjoyed. But before he could be freed, then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger stepped in and reversed the parole board's decision. Cyprien was heartbroken, and he stayed in prison another year.

In 2010, Cyprien applied for parole again. This time he had all of his cards lined up. After being released he was going to live with his wife. He had contacted potential employers in the Bay Area. And he had a spot pending in an Oakland re-entry program. The parole board recognized all of this, finding him suitable for release once again. But just like the previous year, Schwarzenegger overturned the decision.

In 2011, Cyprien took a different approach. He filed a writ of habeas corpus with the courts claiming wrongful detention. It was a costly legal battle, financed by his wife, but it eventually freed him last fall. "I just wanted to get out of there as fast as I could," Cyprien remembered. "Before someone said 'Nah man, we made a mistake.'"

In a 2009 interview with the Los Angeles Times, then Attorney General Jerry Brown acknowledged the problems with California's criminal justice system and the failings of determinate sentencing: "If a prisoner knows he's going to spend a determined amount of time for a crime, it may create a deterrent. But then once in prison, there's no incentive to do work programs to improve yourself — no incentive that you can get out earlier. That's bad. That's very bad. ... I think the whole prison system needs to be changed."



Stephen Loewinsohn

Lindsey Boler (his last name was misspelled on his prison ID card) was released about a year ago.

A few times, Brown has hinted at a return to indeterminate sentencing. And he isn't the only politician who feels this way. Over the past three decades, state lawmakers have introduced nine separate pieces of legislation that could have changed sentencing laws. Each one considered a return to indeterminate sentencing.

It's understandable why indeterminate sentencing is so appealing. A recent report by the California Department of Corrections showed that the state could save up to $800 million a year if it brought its recidivism rate back to pre-1977 levels. Rehabilitation is key. Recent research has shown that education-oriented programs in prison can reduce the odds of re-offending by 29 percent; job training can reduce it by 17 percent; and drug rehabilitation and addiction diversion programs can drop the recidivism rate by 31 percent. Because indeterminate sentencing provides the lure of an early release, it brings prisoners into these programs and consequently cuts recidivism.

Yet despite its attractiveness, indeterminate sentencing is unlikely to return to California anytime soon, Weisberg said. "Most people don't want to return to an old-school indeterminate sentencing system," he said. "No one wants to grant too much power to parole boards anymore."

And, to a certain degree, that's understandable. In the past, parole boards were regularly accused of discrimination, and in the present, they tend to keep inmates, namely lifers, well beyond their minimum terms. But as history has shown, criminal justice in California has never been static. Public opinion and policy can sway suddenly. "If you take a somewhat longer historical perspective, things can change rather dramatically and rather quickly," Weisberg said. "Nothing is destined in this area; everything is in play if the political forces align properly." ●

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Ramsay Bell Breslin says books have always felt like art to her.

Stephen Loewinsohn

CULTURE SPY

BOOKS AS ARTIFACTS

Struggling to find readers, small East Bay presses put together an art exhibit of their overstock at the Berkeley Art Museum.

By Holly McDede

Authors who have been published by major publishing houses know that the lifespan of their book is almost always short and tragic. "For larger publishers, some books will come out on a Monday and by Friday they'll be out of print and dead," said Brent Cunningham, operations director of Small Press Distribution, the only distributor in the country dedicated exclusively to independently published literature.

At small presses like the ones Cunningham works with, the profit motive is smaller and the books live longer. But that doesn't necessarily mean anyone is going to buy them. In many cases, the books become furniture, or potentially collapsing safety hazards. "Our books could take up a few football fields," Cunningham said. "That's what happens when you love books too much. You can't get rid of them."

This became a serious problem for Berkeley's Kelsey Street Press. Ramsay Bell Breslin, one of Kelsey Street's founders, knew that she had to either throw away the overstocked books or pay $80 a month to store them. The latter option was complicated by the fact that funding sources had dried up after the publisher lost its nonprofit status.

Then while going through a pile of books one day, Breslin couldn't help but admire the texture of the hardcovers, the smell of the pages, and the inclusive nature of the book spine. Kelsey Street Press may be releasing its first e-book later this year, but Breslin, like many bibliophiles, still has a thing for the physical presence of books.

"Books have always felt like art to me," Breslin said. "I've always thought of them as objects. It always made sense to me that they should be displayed in a museum."

So last fall, Breslin started working with Lawrence Rinder, the director of the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, to create an art exhibit out of her overstock. The idea was to solve a financial problem by highlighting the physical appeal of books from local presses in the East Bay.

Rinder loved the idea. "Museums are asking the same questions bookstores are," he said. "I mean, why go to a museum if you can just look at pictures online in high resolution? It's about the experience."

Dubbed "The Reading Room" and curated by Breslin, the exhibit opened in mid-January and runs through June 17. It resides in the cavernous lobby and features poetry and experimental fiction from local publishers like Kelsey Street Press, Atelos Books, and Tuumba Press. On the surface it looks like an old-fashioned bookstore: there are several bookcases, two giant cozy chairs, a blanket for snuggling, and reading lamps that hang from the shelves.

Actually, said Breslin, *The Reading Room* is a book in and of itself. "You can read it from left to right," she explained, walking through the exhibit one recent day. "On the first shelf, the books face forward," she said. "On the next shelf the same books are facing backwards." Then we came across books that were not yet born — their covers were laid out flat. "These are book flats, with no spines, before they've been printed," she said. Some books appear multiple times, creating a syncopating rhythm. Other books are organized by size or by color, forming a rainbow. Overhead, through speakers, the quiet voices of poets reading play. Breslin said her goal was to create a sense of quietude "as opposed to that enforced library silence."

The temptation to grab the blanket and read a book for the rest of the day was powerful. But the books themselves are not so easy to tackle. Many are experimental or genre-bending. *Poetical Dictionary* by Lohren Green, for example, is written as though it were a dictionary and fiction all at once. Perhaps that's the point of The Reading Room: to force people to be brave and discover new books they might otherwise overlook.

Event Details

The Reading Room runs through June 17 at the Berkeley Art Museum (2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley). BAMPFA.Berkeley.edu

To further encourage discovery, the museum instituted a "take a book, leave a book" policy. Initially, this element concerned some authors, who worried that giving away their books for free would give readers the impression that they're not of value. But Cunningham, who contributed some books from Small Press Distribution to the exhibit, believed this would be offset by the potential to engage new readers. "We're hoping that it'll be like a gateway drug for small presses," he said. "People will get our experimental book they wouldn't normally read and become addicted."

The sharing aspect also adds a dynamic angle to the exhibit. Museum-goers have left everything from children's books to 'zines on the shelves. "The Reading Room is about experiencing books," said Rinder. "It's a shared conversation. If someone takes a book, the exhibit changes completely."

Naturally, a reading series seemed an appropriate accompaniment to The Reading Room exhibit. RE@DS, hosted by poet/author David Brazil and poet/publisher/SFMOMA community producer Suzanne Stein, invites young poets to give a reading that incorporates multimedia elements, just as The Reading Room incorporates both the museum landscape and poetry. "The readers have complete creative freedom," said Stein, "except with some limitations presented by budgets and safety."

In one performance, San Francisco poet Christian Nagler invited the audience to do calisthenics while he gave a lecture on the economics of equity. In another, poet Tom Comitta led the audience in a "guerrilla opera," which entailed singing from a book of poetry for forty minutes. "Everyone participates," said Comitta. "Even if you aren't doing anything, people will notice that, too. You can play with a person you've never met before, or you can sit alone in a corner."

At Brian Ang's reading on March 23, the scene was as serious, intellectual, and literary as can be. When Brazil introduced Ang as the night's reader, Ang did not stand up and rise to the front of the room as expected. Instead, a composition by multi-instrumentalist Anthony Braxton played for a few minutes. Some members of the audience closed their eyes; others fidgeted, texted, or read from *Occupation Treatment*, the free book by Taylor Brady that had been left on everyone's chairs. After describing his collection of poetry *Pre-symbolic* as the "most encyclopedic collection of poetry ever written," Ang read some poems: *"Onset of mechanical reproduction transformation/ Haphazard administrative visible imagined/incorporated morphology aesthetics/Metaphysical groundpoint/ Generations of science theory."*

THE SHARING ASPECT ALSO ADDS A DYNAMIC ANGLE TO THE EXHIBIT. MUSEUM-GOERS HAVE LEFT EVERYTHING FROM CHILDREN'S BOOKS TO 'ZINES ON THE SHELVES. "THE READING ROOM IS ABOUT EXPERIENCING BOOKS," SAID RINDER. "IT'S A SHARED CONVERSATION. IF SOMEONE TAKES A BOOK, THE EXHIBIT CHANGES COMPLETELY."

The Reading Room isn't the only East Bay exhibit melding books with art. Pictures + Words, a new artist series at the Bay Area Free Book Exchange that runs through July, invites artists Philip King, Michelle Wilson, and Timothy Buckwalter to use pages from books to create narratives in ways typically associated with literature. "I love books, don't get me wrong," said Wilson. "But sometimes text locks the story in. I'm interested in creating a story without doing that." The pages, which Wilson made, will not be displayed in order, forcing readers to make up their own stories.

Inspired by The Reading Room, Small Press Distribution is also hosting a reading series and book giveaway on April 30, the last day of National Poetry Month. While reading series usually entail people reading out loud, in this series poets will read silently in their heads, which you can watch if you'd like. Or you can just grab a book and run. The old rules of what can and cannot be done with books have, it seems, vanished. ●

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—Los Angeles Times

The heir to a powerful musical legacy Seun Kuti lights up the stage in a rousing celebration of Afrobeat music. Kuti's father Fela was the legendary Nigerian musician, composer, and political maverick. The musical form he helped create is now more popular than ever, in part due to the success of the smash 2010 Broadway hit *FELA!* A musical powerhouse in his own right, Seun Kuti continues to spread this ferocious groove, and he comes to Cal Performances fronting Fela's legendary band, Egypt 80.

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EVENTS & ATTRACTIONS

A Seriously Silly Parade

The Richmond Silly Parade affords the city some comic relief.

Richmond resident Michael Beer is serious about being silly — a word that, as he defines it, describes anything that might bring a smile to someone's face. The origins of Beer's jocular nature could have something to do with the eighteen years he spent teaching kindergarten, where he said he discovered the merits of injecting fun into everyday activities. It could also be owed to the summers he spends at a performing arts camp, polishing up his clowning skills. And if anything can be said of such credentials, it's that they surely qualify Beer to orchestrate an event like the Richmond Silly Parade, an annual gathering at the intersection of Richmond's 23rd Street and MacDonald Avenue at which veritable goofballs parade through the streets in various states of silliness.

A Silly Parade participant.

Since its inception two years ago, the parade has attracted such participants as the Senior Citizen Dry-Water Swim Team, a group of octogenarians decked out in shower caps and floatation devices executing synchronized landlocked backstrokes; a cluster of women with painted moustaches bestowing similar faux facial hair to parade watchers; and, perhaps highest on the hierarchy of hilarity, costumed dogs. Beer describes the mood of the family-friendly affair as a blend of the How Berkeley Can You Be Parade with less gratuitous nudity and the Solano Stroll with a lot more spontaneity. More than anything, though, Beer said his parade can best be described as "silly — very silly. I'm just trying to change the world, one smile at a time."

All silliness aside, Beer started the city-sanctioned parade in an attempt to unify Richmond residents and to draw people from nearby cities to what he considers an often overlooked East Bay town. He'd marched in the city's annual Cinco de Mayo and Juneteenth parades, and noticed that each tended to draw mostly Latino or African-American participants, respectively. Beer wanted to establish a community-oriented event that brought out everyone at once. Drawing inspiration from the Pasadena Doo Dah Parade (touted as the "twisted sister" of the same city's Rose Parade), he decided that a little levity might be the one thing to bring everyone together, regardless of age, race, ethnicity or neighborhood. "I thought that humor would be sort of a solvent to dissolve barriers," he explained. "I was trying to build a bridge between different neighborhoods, using humor as rebar."

This year's parade, the "sixth-annual" (it's actually the third, but Beer dubbed the inaugural parade the fourth-annual to get a "running start") on Saturday, April 14 will feature the returning Senior Citizen Dry-Water Swim Team, the Richmond-based Umoja Gospel Choir, a handful of giant puppets, an electric car fashioned into the form of an elephant, and more. Beer said he's also hoping for more canines in costume, a wind-chime orchestra, and perhaps a cavalcade of strollers rolling down the middle of the road. He's open to all interpretations of silliness, and encourages willing participants to call him at 510-235-5519 or email RichmondSillyParade@gmail.com to sign up or seek suggestions. 11 a.m.–11:32 a.m., followed by a taco truck-fueled after-party. Free. Rain reschedules to Saturday, April 21.

— *Cassie Horwood*

ATTRACTIONS

Make-Do! A Recycle and Upcycle Art and Fashion Show With a variety fashion show, upcycle and vintage fashion vendors, food, and more. Fri., Apr. 13, 6-9 p.m. Rhythmix Cultural Works, 2513 Blanding Ave., Alameda. 510-865-5060. Rhythmix.org.

Simulated Space Mission With a simulated space flight to Mars. Ages 8 and up. Through Apr. 17, 1 & 2 p.m. $10 plus general admission. Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-7373. ChabotSpace.org.

Tax Day Flash Mob The [illegible] Youth Action Team leads poetry, song, theater, and dance in support of [illegible]. Tue., Apr. 17, 2 p.m., free. [illegible] Oakland City Hall, 1 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Oakland.

FAIRS, FESTIVALS & FIESTAS

Earth Day 2012: Action for Animals With earth-themed activities and educational [illegible]. Sat., Apr. 14, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., free with admission. Oakland Zoo, 9777 Golf Links Rd., Oakland. 510-632-9525. OaklandZoo.org.

Earth Day at Chabot With crafting from recycled materials, energy and climate change workshops, and more. Bring broken household [illegible] to be fixed and [illegible] for crafting. Sat., Apr. 14, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., free w/admission. Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-7373. ChabotSpace.org.

Urban Releaf Day With music by [illegible]. Sat., Apr. 14, [illegible] p.m., $5-$20. [illegible] Gallery, 466 14th St., Oakland. 510-[illegible].

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Action Herbalism with Kathi Keville A seminar covering the [illegible] of aromatherapy and essential oil use. Sun., Apr. 15, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. $130. Ohlone Herbal Center, 1250 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-540-8811. OhloneCenter.org.

[illegible] Techniques in Applied Shamanism With a discussion of ancient healing techniques of shamanism and how they are applied in a therapeutic context today. Mon., Apr. 16, 7-9 p.m. [illegible] 415-333-1434. [illegible] Valley Life Sciences Building, UC Berkeley, Berkeley. 510-642-6000. Berkeley.edu.

Impact Play: Make It Hurt so Good Learn the [illegible] of impact play. Wed., Apr. 18, 6:30-7:30 p.m. [illegible] Good Vibrations, 2504 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-8987. GoodVibes.com.

Tennyson High School Impact Festival With hands-on health and nutrition activities, [illegible] a tour of the [illegible] community garden. At 27035 Whitman St., Hayward. Fri., Apr. 13, 2:30 p.m., free.

KIDS

Aesthetic With family-friendly [illegible] tales. Wed., Apr. 18, 7 p.m., free. [illegible] San Leandro Library, 300 Estudillo Ave., San Leandro.

Animal Signs and Homes Search for tracks, trails, and other signs of nearby creatures. Sat., Apr. 14, 1:30-3 p.m., free. Tilden Park Environmental Education Center, north end of Central Park Drive, Berkeley. 888-327-2757. EBParks.org.

Do-It-Yourself Jewelry Crafts for Children and Teens With [illegible] arts and crafts stations led by YMCA artists. Sun., Apr. 15, 12-3 p.m. Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak St., Oakland. 510-318-8400. MuseumCA.org.

East Bay Moms Hike With a moderate three-mile loop around Quarry Trail. Meet at the Quarry picnic area. Fri., Apr. 13, 10 a.m., free. EastBayMoms.com. Tilden Regional Park. Entrances off Wildcat Canyon Rd. and South Park Drive, Berkeley. 510-843-2137. EBParks.org/Parks/Tilden.

Fun on the Farm: Spring Babies Meet lambs, watch herding dogs in action, and learn old-fashioned wool carding. Sat., Apr. 14, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., free. Forest Home Farms, 19953 San Ramon Valley Blvd., San Ramon. 925-973-3080.

Gold Panning Learn how to pan for gold, the differences [illegible] and fool's

PICKS

Strictly Sail Pacific Boat Show

Whether you're a seasoned sailor or an aspirational one-timer, the Strictly Sail Pacific Boat Show — set to blow into Jack London Square for four days of events — will be a sight to behold. Attendees can partake in activities like free sailboat rides, sailing seminars, and info sessions on the upcoming America's Cup races; and peruse all the new boats and gear for sale. At Jack London Square (50 Washington St., Oakland) Thursday through Sunday, Apr. 12-15. Thu.-Fri. 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., $15-$45 (free for ages fifteen and under with adult). StrictlySailPacific.com *— Cassie Harwood*

Strictly Sail Pacific Boat Show

Earth Day Restoration and Cleanup

If California's state parks ever needed a little love, it's right now. Last year, budget cuts threatened the closure of 70 of our 279 parks; a few have been saved by community partnerships, but many will be shuttered this summer. Of those that will remain open, many are in dire need of additional support. The California State Parks Foundation's fifteenth-annual Earth Day Restoration and Cleanup on Saturday, Apr. 14, will help by coordinating volunteer cleanups at nineteen sites statewide, including Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline (Doolittle Dr. and Swan Way, Oakland), where 150 people are needed to remove invasive plants and trash and plant new shrubs. 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m., free. 510-544-3182 or CalParks.org/programs/earth-day. — C.H

gold, and the History of the California Gold Rush, Sun., Apr. 15, 12-4 p.m., museum admission. Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak St., Oakland. 510-318-8400. MuseumCA.org.

Our Parents Made Us Do It Book Club Discussing Emily [illegible] *The Knee* [illegible] for ages 10-14. Thu., Apr. 12, 4 p.m. Books Inc. Alameda, 1344 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-2226. BooksInc.net/Alameda.

[illegible] Group for Young Holmes Teen Tour [illegible] Stephanie [illegible] and [illegible]. Tue., Apr. 17, 7 p.m. A Great Good Place for Books, 6120 LaSalle Ave., Oakland. 510-339-8210. GreatGoodPlace. IndieBound.com.

Reptile Run An interactive family-friendly walk to observe reptiles and turtles. Sun., Apr. 15, 10:30 a.m.-noon, free. Tilden Park Environmental Education Center, north end of Central Park Drive, Berkeley. 888-327-2757. EBParks.org.

Spring Camp at Habitot [illegible] activities for kids ages 3-5. Through Apr. 13, 9 a.m.-[illegible] p.m., $30/day. [illegible] Habitot Children's Museum, 2065 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-647-1111. Habitot.org.

[illegible] An outdoor program for kids ages 8-12. [illegible] required. Wed., Apr. 18, 3:30-5:30 p.m., $6-$8. Tilden Park Environmental Education Center, north end of Central Park Drive, Berkeley. 888-327-2757. EBParks.org.

LGBT

[illegible] Hey Girl Hey Productions presents a monthly tea dance for women who like women. Second Sunday of every [illegible], 5-9 p.m., $5. HeyGirlHeyProductions.com. [illegible] Bar and Lounge, [illegible] Grand Ave., Oakland. [illegible].

RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

Angel Light Metaphysical Fair With Tarot, psychic, crystal, and angel readings, plus healings and refreshments. Sun., Apr. 15, 1-6 p.m. $15. Angel Light Books, 3047 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley. 510-985-1680. AngelLightBooks.com.

Erika Rosenberg: "Seeing through Self-Images" The research psychologist on human emotions discusses [illegible] [illegible] self-images. Sun., Apr. 15, 6-7 p.m., free. [illegible] Tibetan-Nyingma Institute, 1815 Highland Pl., Berkeley. 510-843-6812. Nyingma.org.

Public Satsang With spiritual teacher Peter Bowie, first and third Wednesday of every [illegible], 7:30-9 p.m., $10-$15. TheQuietRecovery.org. [illegible] Club, 3198 Center St., Berkeley. 510-848-3227. [illegible]Club.org.

Tibetan Chanting Starting Apr. 15. Sundays, 5-6 p.m. Continues through Apr. 29, free-$15. Tibetan Nyingma Institute, 1815 Highland Pl., Berkeley. 510-843-6812. Nyingma.org.

SOCIAL EVENTS

[illegible] Lady Saloon [illegible] for women. [illegible] Sun., Apr. 15, 6-8 p.m. [illegible] Haltmeowtle's [illegible] Vintage, 5001 [illegible] Ave., Oakland. 510-788-8396. [illegible].net.

[illegible] Casual, [illegible] and dancing to world, funk, [illegible] and other [illegible] music. [illegible] free. Sundays, 7:30-11 p.m. [illegible].com. Eighth Street Studio, 2525 Eighth St., Berkeley. 510-527-5035.

Trivia and [illegible] Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m., free. The [illegible] Lounge, 1453 Webster St., Alameda. 510-864-1244. The[illegible]Lounge.com.

SPORTS & OUTDOORS-PARTICIPATORY

[illegible] for Beginners With [illegible] available for loan. Sun., Apr. 15, 10-11:30 a.m., free. Crab Cove, 1252 McKay Ave., Alameda. 510-562-7275. EBParks.org.

[illegible] Join the Alameda Dragon Flyers for free introductory dragon boating sessions. Equipment provided. Meets at 2400 [illegible] Square Dr., Alameda. Saturdays, 8:00-12:30 a.m., free. 510-521-7559. AlamedaDragonFlyers.com.

[illegible] Party [illegible] party for riders of all ages, experience levels, and bike types, to meet, ride, and play [illegible] the lemur. Check [illegible] for meeting place, route, [illegible] starting time. [illegible] Friday of every month, free. EastBay-[illegible].com.

[illegible] Lake [illegible] Night Ride Weekly off-road mountain bike rides followed by beer and beverages. [illegible] lights [illegible]. Riders of all skill levels welcome. Contact: [illegible] [illegible].com or 510-470-3581 for more information. Sundays, 6:30-8:30 p.m., free. Lake Chabot Regional Park, 17600 Lake Chabot Rd., Castro Valley. 510-747-3620. EBParks.org/Parks/Lake_Chabot.

Fight Club Play old-versus fighting video games like *Soul Calibur* and *Street Fighter* with a tournament at 7:30 p.m. Tournament game determined by participants. Sundays, 6-8 p.m., free general play, $5 tournament entry. The Museum of Art and Digital Entertainment, 610 16th St., Oakland. TheMADE.org.

Berkeley Hooptenanny for all ages. Sundays, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., free. BerkeleyHooping.com. Jack London Square Farmer's Market, Oakland and Embarcadero, Oakland.

Julia [illegible]: "Foot Care for Any Sport: Fit, Blisters, and More" The [illegible] expert and longtime athlete [illegible] tips on fit, [illegible] and [illegible] blisters, [illegible] and [illegible]. Sat., Apr. 14, 11 a.m.-noon, free. REI Berkeley, 1338 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-527-4140. REI.com.

Lowland [illegible] Hike A slow-paced ramble hike to explore [illegible]. Sun., Apr. 15, 1 p.m. [illegible] Sycamore Grove/Veterans Park, 5333 Wetmore Rd., Livermore. 925-960-2400. LARPD.info. [illegible]/open_space/sycamore.html

Midnight [illegible] Second and fourth Saturday of every [illegible], 11:45 p.m., free. [illegible].com.

[illegible] Trivia Sundays, 7:30 p.m., free. Swell Bar, 1530 Lincoln Ave., Alameda. 510-522-6263. SwellBarAlameda.com.

[illegible] Family Day Hike Explore the redwood ecosystem that surrounds [illegible] and discover the life of ancient giant trees. Fri., Apr. 13, [illegible] & 2 p.m., free w/ admission. Chabot Space & Science Center, 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-7373. ChabotSpace.org.

Windsurfing Lessons Saturdays, 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., free to members, $75 for three months. CalSailing.org. Berkeley Marina, 201 University Ave., Berkeley. 510-981-6740. CityofBerkeley.info/Marina.

SPORTS-SPECTATOR

Golden Gate Fields Dollar Days With dollar hot dogs and other dollary delights. Sundays, $1. Golden Gate Fields, 1100 Eastshore Hwy, Berkeley. 510-559-7300. GoldenGateFields.com.

[illegible] Stars available Versus the Dallas Mavericks. Thu., Apr. 12, 7:30 p.m., $27-$2,202. Oracle Arena, 7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland. 510-569-2121. California.com.

Golden State Warriors Versus the San Antonio Spurs. Mon., Apr. 16, 7:30 p.m., $10-$1,400. Oracle Arena, 7000 Coliseum Way, Berkeley. 510-569-2121. California.com. Versus the Los Angeles Lakers. Wed., Apr. 18, 7:30 p.m., $10-$7,500. Group tickets. 7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland. 510-569-2121. Coliseum.com.

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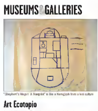
MUSEUMS & GALLERIES



"Shepherd's Wagon: A Blueprint" is like a hieroglyph from a lost culture.

Art Ecotopia

Land, Use examines the role of art in forging a healthier relationship between man and the environment.

We live in a world where it has become gloriously passé to ask the question, "Is it art?" Notions of what is beautiful, what is didactic, what is science, and what simply exists because of a metabolic necessity all fit safely in the art world's spectrum. But when considering *Land, Use* at the David Brower Center it is difficult not to ask this basic and tired question about the role of the gallery and the exhibitions it presents. Are we looking at a science experiment? Are we supposed to take arms after understanding some kind of experimental dialogue describing the state of the agricultural world? Are we to accept art as an appropriate venue to teach us anything at all in the first place?

Fortunately, the answer to all these questions is yes. Amy Franceschini and Fernando García-Dory, the two artists involved with this exhibition, intimately understand the edge of this dynamic and exploit it with abandon. More than a "this world is screwed" mentality that so often pervades discussions of ecology and global culture, this exhibit presents a visual and linguistic lexicon that describes a new, hopeful world of art and, yes, agriculture. We are invited to join an achievable movement of minds and hearts toward what is called "contemporary pastoralism."

Franceschini presents a system of technologies, including the subversive "*This Is Not a Trojan Horse*" and "*Victory Gardens (Microclimate Specific) Seed Library*," both of which describe a path that has nothing to do with our current gas-guzzling global culture. García-Dory seamlessly complements Franceschini's vision with a series of documents that record the artist's resonant meetings and efforts with shepherding cultures and modern nomads, demonstrating the triumph over huge, logistical challenges. The narrative that unfolds is a map of utopia, or ecotopia, but not one that is at all unrealistic — in fact, it is kind of familiar.

The enigma and promise of it all is exemplified by the collaborative painting by both artists "Shepherd's Wagon, a Blueprint." The sweeping scale of the simple composition bespeaks its epic nature, but what are we to make of it? It's like a hieroglyph from some lost culture that seemed to have it more together than we do — left in awe, we simply marvel. Ultimately, the artists understand that if they are overly explicit in their agenda, the art suffers. The genius of this show is its ability to maintain the difficult balance between spelling out the whole mystery and presenting a new and wonderful reality where our potential to live in harmony with a healthy earth is realized.

Land, Use runs through May 9 at the David Brower Center's Hazel Wolf Gallery (2150 Allston Way, Berkeley). 510-809-0909 or BrowerCenter.org.

— *Oli Kaufmann*

ART GALLERIES

[illegible]

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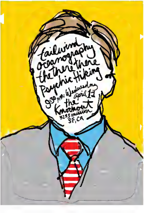

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PROGRAMMED BY SARAH CAHILL

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PICKS

Small Worlds

Robert Brady is a treasure — a prolific East Bay genius who has been consistently showing his art locally for 45 years. In his new show *Small Worlds*, an intimate collection of work at Trax Gallery (1812 Fifth St., Berkeley), we get a succinct cross-section of the master's portfolio of ceramic sculpture. The cozy gallery, complete with his pond and shaggy dog, is the perfect casual environment for this understated show. Amid an almost biological array of large painted stones are small, figurative works that resemble bright, animistic totems nearly springing to life with expressionist candor and a kind of wit that only decades of honest practice can bring. Even in Brady's few paintings on display, form is a plastic notion that's not understandable without the filter of his own interpretation. *Small Worlds* runs through April 29. 510-540-6759 or TraxGallery.com. — *Obi Kaufmann*

Robert Brady
"Two

Obi Kaufmann

State of Mind

The most ambitiously curated show in the East Bay right now is also the most enigmatic. To fully appreciate *State of Mind: New California Art circa 1970* at the Berkeley Art Museum (2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley), set aside a couple of hours and come ready to work — work at grasping the amount of art (more than 150 works by 60 artists) encyclopedically presented, all of it wonderfully strange. Consider not only the greats of California conceptualism (e.g. Baldessari, Nauman, Ruscha, and Burden), but also the array of lesser giants, who are often more interested in satirizing the process of art making. It gets complicated pretty quickly, but hang on, the journey is worth it. The show itself embodies all these disparate, intellectual game-things into one beautiful museum experience — arguably more of a work of art than any of the pieces are individually. Show runs through June 17. 510-642-0808 or BAMPFA.Berkeley.edu. — *O.K.*

interactive brief on turning perspective. Through Apr. 18. [illegible] 2940 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-[illegible]

Worth Ryder Gallery: Friendship Park: Home by Nathaniel Blair All [illegible] video and art show exploring the US/Mexico border as a [illegible] temporally, [illegible] and physically. Through Apr. 14. **Mosaic: [illegible] 40+ Years of [illegible]** With small works by the UC Berkeley and San Francisco Art Institute [illegible] shows over the past four decades. Through Apr. 29. 116 Kroeber Hall, Berkeley, 510-642-2582.

MUSEUMS

BAM/PFA: [illegible] [illegible] interactive [illegible] [illegible] and stage, [illegible] world over a [illegible] of foam. On display in Gallery B. Through Apr. 1. **Andy Warhol: Polaroids** With more than 50 Polaroids and 20 black-and-white prints, taken between 1970 and 1987. Through May 20. 2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-642-0808, BAMPFA.Berkeley.edu.

Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive: The Oakland-Berkeley Fire Aftermath Photographs by [illegible]. Through Oct. 5. **Sea Works** An exhibit of colorful photographs by Sarah Charlesworth and Chris McCaw. Through May 8. **Himalayan Pilgrimage: Journeys to the Land of Snows** Sculptures and paintings from Tibet. Through June 30, 2013. 2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-642-0808, BAMPFA.Berkeley.edu.

C.E. Smith Museum of Anthropology: The Magic Lantern: Illuminating a Bygone Era An exhibition of antique magic lanterns and glass slides from the turn of the 20th century. Through June 15. 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., Hayward. 510-885-3104.

Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology: From the Maker's Hand From the permanent collection, a selection of works from China, Egypt, and Peru, plus [illegible] in Africa, North America, and the Mediterranean. Daily. **Native Californian Museum** This "visible archive" exhibition comprises more than 500 objects from the museum's collection of native Californian cultures. Daily. 103 Kroeber Hall, Berkeley. 510-643-7648, HearstMuseum.Berkeley.edu.

Institute of Mosaic Art: California Mosaic Artists: Celebrating Diversity An ongoing group show. Daily. **Mosaic Art: Pet Portraits** A [illegible] of pets, in mosaic. Daily. 3001 Chapman St., Oakland. 510-433-0999, MosaicArt.com.

Lacis Museum of Lace and Textiles: [illegible] An exhibition of antique and vintage hats, including a selection of caps, hoods, and bonnets. Through Aug. 4. 2982 Adeline St., Berkeley. 510-843-7290, LacisMuseum.org.

Lawrence Hall of Science: Science on a Sphere (SOS) New permanent exhibit features an animated globe. Watch hurricanes form, tsunamis sweep across the oceans, and city lights glow around the planet. Daily. $8-$10. **Imaginate** An interactive exhibit that combines creativity with science. Activities include storytelling, [illegible] animation, [illegible] design, and more. Through Apr. 29. 1 Centennial Dr., Berkeley. 510-642-5132, LawrenceHallofScience.org.

Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life: Projections Multimedia works from the museum's extensive collections of amateur, documentary, and experimental films. Daily. **Magnes Lab** Interactive installation allows visitors to [illegible] family albums and [illegible] based on their own documents, photographs, and memories. Daily. 2121 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-643-2526, Magnes.org.

Oakland International Airport: All of Us or None: Social Justice Posters of the San Francisco Bay Area With reproductions of 69 posters by various artists, addressing [illegible] issues from modern US progressive movements. Exhibition stems from an archive project started by Free Speech Movement activist [illegible] in 1977. Through May 15. Free, with purchase of airplane ticket, and subsequently only viewable in post-security zone. 1 Airport Dr., Oakland.

Oakland Museum of California: The 1968 Exhibit A multimedia [illegible] covering the events of 1968, a turning point for a generation coming of age and a nation at war. Through Aug. 19. Museum admission. **Counterpoint: Lisa Levine and [illegible] Tonningsen** An ongoing series of work exploring the urban landscape of the East Bay. Through June 15. **All of Us or None: Social Justice Posters of the San Francisco Bay Area** A comprehensive [illegible] exploring the poster renaissance of the mid-1960s, with 50 original objects [illegible] as well as posters digitally archived and collaged on the gallery walls. Through Aug. 12. Museum admission. **Space-Light-Structure: The Jewelry of Margaret De Patta** A comprehensive examination of the life and art of the pioneering Modernist artist and her influence on jewelry making. Through May 13. Museum admission. **Space-Light-Structure: The Jewelry of Margaret De Patta** A retrospective exhibition on the work of pioneer jeweler Margaret De Patta, exploring more than 80 jewelry pieces as well as ceramics, flatware, photographs, photograms, and newly [illegible]. Through May 13. **Question Bridge: Black Males** A video installation featuring questions with 150 black men in eleven cities across the US. The exhibition explores themes of family, love, interracial relationships, community, education, violence, and more. Through July 8. Museum admission. **Gallery of California Art** With more than 800 works from the OMCA collection. Through Dec. 2. **Mosaic Carpenter: The Art of [illegible]** The first major survey of the [illegible]-based [illegible], featuring original drawings and artifacts in an inspired installation environment. Apr. 14-Aug. 12. 1000 Oak St., Oakland. 510-318-8400, MuseumCA.org.

Pacific Pinball Museum: Advances in the Development of Pinball With pinball-themed physics, mechanics, electronics, art, and testing exhibits. Through July 8. **Historic Pinball Exhibit** With 15 pinballs and 20 wedgeheads from Larry Zartarian's [illegible] games representing early pinballs from the collections of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Hesse, Dan Miller, and [illegible]. Daily. $15, under 12 $7.50. 1510 Webster St., Alameda. 510-205-6959, PacificPinball.org.

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THEATER & DANCE

COMEDY

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Joe Tobin With Jeff Applebaum, Gary Stockdale Robinson, Rich Grayling, and Colleen Watson. Hosted by Joe Gledhill. Sat., Apr. 14, 8 p.m. $8-$10. 510-214-2020. ComedyOffBroadwayOakland.com. Miss Pearl's Restaurant & Lounge (at the Waterfront Hotel), One Broadway @ Jack London Square, Oakland, 510-444-7171, MissPearlsJamHouse.com.

Josef Anolin With Stefan Dorn, Lyell Simone, and Lydia Popovich. Hosted by Joe Gledhill and Samson Koletkar. Thu., Apr. 12, 8 p.m. $8-$10. 510-214-2020. ComedyOffBroadwayOakland.com. Miss Pearl's Restaurant & Lounge (at the Waterfront Hotel), One Broadway @ Jack London Square, Oakland, 510-444-7171, MissPearlsJamHouse.com.

Larry [illegible] With Natasha Muse, Amir Maleteyour, Dan Gill, and Dave Sirus. Hosted by Joe Gledhill and Samson Koletkar. Fri., Apr. 13, 8 p.m. $8-$10. 510-214-2020, ComedyOffBroadwayOakland.com. Miss Pearl's Restaurant & Lounge (at the Waterfront Hotel), One Broadway, Jack London Square, Oakland, 510-444-7171, MissPearlsJamHouse.com.

Mortified Adults read from their teenage diaries, with improv comedy/acoustic ensemble Hugs. Sat., Apr. 14, 8-11 p.m., $15-$20. 510-655-4235, Mortified.com. Shattuck Down Low, 2284 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-548-1159, ShattuckDownLow.com.

Oakland Comedy Slam and Open Mic Hosted by Nazareth and Corbett Jeffries, with DJ Mr. G. Second Thursday of every month, 8 p.m. $7-$10. Club Oasis, 135 12th St., Oakland, 510-763-0404.

Paula Poundstone At the Livermore Performing Arts Center (2400 1st St., Livermore). Fri., Apr. 13, 8 p.m. $51-$68. 925-373-6100, PaulaPoundstone.com.

Say What? Comedy improv show With Awkward Face. Saturdays, 8 p.m. $10. Pan Theater, 2135 Broadway, Oakland, 415-261-1548, PanTheater.com.

Sunday Night Comedy and Poetry Hosted by LeRoy Stanfield Jr. Ages 21 and up. Sundays, 8 p.m. GoBabyProductions.com. Island Paradise Club, 1436 Webster St., Alameda, 510-865-3225, IslandParadiseClub.com

Sylvan Productions Presents Comedy Night With Kanecia Dobbins, Priya Prasad, Bobby Goza and Justin [illegible]. Hosted by Lil Patterson. Thursdays, 7-9:30 p.m. Free. Vinos, 281 Broadway, Oakland, 510-452-8078, VinosOakland.com.

The Untold Story Improv comedy with Awkward Face. Saturdays, 8 p.m., $10-$12. Pan Theater, 2135 Broadway, Oakland, 415-261-1548, PanTheater.com.

LIVE VARIETY

L@te: Friday Nights @ BAM/PFA: The Sun (Part Two) With genre-crossing, a performance by sound artist McKelvey, a screening of filmmaker Kelly Lyne Jones' latest work, and a performance by the International Improv Chorale of San Francisco. Fri., Apr. 13, noon. $7. BAM/PFA, 2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 510-642-0808, BAMPFA.Berkeley.edu.

THEATER & PERFORMING ARTS

Anatol Aurora Theatre presents the world premiere translation of Arthur Schnitzler's first theatrical work for the stage, about the love-obsessed life of a bourgeois Viennese philanderer. Sundays, 2 & 7 p.m., Wednesdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m., Tuesdays, 7 p.m. Continues through May 13. $30-$48. Aurora Theatre, 2081 Addison St., Berkeley, 510-843-4822, AuroraTheatre.org.

Any Given Day San Francisco's Magic Theatre presents a performance of British playwright Linda McLean's play, a contemporary drama of urban life in Glasgow. Sat., Apr. 14, 2:30 p.m. Free. MagicTheatre.org/about/oakland. Laney College Theatre, 900 Fallon St., Oakland, 510-464-3398.

Berkeley Public Library and Aurora Theatre Company Present: Anatol Discussion With Aurora Education Director Michael Mansfield and Schnitzler translator and expert Margret Schaefer. [illegible] theater and literature. Tue., Apr. 17, 6:30 p.m. Berkeley Public Library, Central Branch, 2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley, 510-981-6100, BerkeleyPublicLibrary.org.

[illegible] The Kipling Show: [illegible] Misadventures of the Absolute Pink [illegible] [illegible] one-man show chronicles his misadventures throughout the 1960s, from failed attempts at working as a stripper and [illegible] to life as a waiter [illegible]. Saturdays, 8:30 p.m., Sundays, 7 p.m. Continues through May 6. $20-$50. The Marsh Arts Center, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley, 415-826-5750, TheMarsh.org.

Electricidad Luis Alfaro's Latino adaptation of the Greek tragedy *Electra*, set amid the brutal gang culture of a contemporary LA barrio. Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m., Sun., Apr. 22, 2 p.m. Continues through Apr. 21. $15-$25. Douglas Morrisson Theatre, 22311 N. Third St., Hayward, 510-881-6777, DMTonline.org.

Love Notes for My Spirit Child: Testimonies of Healing Mothers through Shadows Memory Featuring testimonies from the mothers and grandmothers of Oakland. Starring Oscar Grant III, Kerry Baxter Jr., Christopher La Vell Jones, Daniel Booker and more. Starting Apr. 14. Saturdays, 2 p.m. Continues through Apr. 21. $7-$20. Black Dot Café, 1195 Pine St., Oakland.

The Mousetrap A sixty-year-anniversary production of Agatha Christie's detective whodunnit, "The longest running 'straight' play in the West End." Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m., Sundays, 2 p.m. Continues through Apr. 22. $15-$22. Altarena Playhouse, 1409 High St., Alameda, 510-523-1553, Altarena.org.

The Real Inspector Hound **and** ***The Fifteen Minute Hamlet*** Two one-act comedies by Tom Stoppard: the former an Agatha Christie-like spoof, the latter an abridgement of William Shakespeare's famous tragedy. Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m., Sun., Apr. 15, 2 p.m. Continues through Apr. 28. $20. Masquers Playhouse, 105 Park Pl., Richmond, 510-232-4031, Masquers.org.

Red Les Waters directs John Logan's Broadway play about an artist's struggle to find a modicum of [illegible]. On the Thrust Stage. No performances on select dates. Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, 8 p.m., Saturdays, 2 & 8 p.m., Sundays, 2 & 7 p.m., Wednesdays, 7 p.m. Continues through May 12. $14.50-$93. Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2025 Addison St., Berkeley, 510-647-2949, BerkeleyRep.org.

Sunset Boulevard Contra Costa's Diablo Theatre presents the Bay Area premiere of the classic Hollywood story of aging silent movie star Norma Desmond. Based on the film by Billy Wilder. Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m., Sundays, 2 p.m. Continues through Apr. 15. $49. Lesher Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek, 925-295-1400, [illegible] ●

PICKS

Dimensions Dance Theater

On any given day, the sounds of spirited drumming and dancing stream from the upper-story windows of the Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts (1428 Alice St., Oakland) — it's simply impossible to pass by without dancing a few steps. When Dimensions Dance Theater takes the center's stage this Saturday, Apr. 14, in its show *Down the Congo Line*, the exhilarating rhythms of New Orleans, Brazil, and Congo will fill the air. Performed to live music by MJ's Brass Boppers, LaTanya Tigner's *The Last Dance* ties New Orleans funeral rituals to their African origins. Tigner dances solo to *Ndoli*, accompanied on drums by Kiazi Malonga and Fua Dia Congo. Brazilian drummers and percussionists provide lively rhythm for Isaura Oliveira's *Congo in Brazil*, which blends movement drawn from Afro-Brazilian *maculelê*, *maracatu*, capoeira, and [illegible]. Get ready to dance in the aisles. 8 p.m. $15-$20. 800-838-3006 or DimensionsDance.org. — *Claudia Bauer*

The Coast of Utopia: Voyage

A pet phrase from another character in a nearby production — John Logan's *Red*, at Berkeley Repertory Theatre — seems apropos in this one: "The child must banish the father. Respect him, but kill him." Indeed, irreverent children abound in this Tom Stoppard epic about the years preceding the Russian Revolution, when members of the younger generation suddenly began reading Kant, pondering "objective reality" and questioning their parents' mores. In this play, the first in a triptych staged by Shotgun Players under the tutelage of Artistic Director Patrick Dooley, that generational rift comes to bear in subtle and profound ways. Old-fashioned matriarch Varvara Bakunin (Zehra Berkman) abuses her serfs while her (ostensibly liberal) husband

Dimensions Dance Theater.

Alexander (the wonderful British actor John Mercer) reigns his "500 souls" estate with iron aplomb. In the meantime, their son Michael (Joseph Salazar) defects from artillery school and becomes wholly — some would say [illegible] — absorbed in his university studies. Although the play features a lot of volleying of philosophical discourse, some of which can be a bit taxing, it's intense enough to leave you ready for the next chapter. Unfortunately you'll have to wait a whole year. Through April 15 at the Ashby Stage (1901 Ashby Ave., Berkeley). $20-$30. 510-841-6500 or ShotgunPlayers.org. — *Rachel Swan*

LECTURES & LIT

The Final Leap

In his new book, John Bateson takes on Golden Gate Bridge suicides

John Bateson remembers it well: It was 1996, and he was just a few days into his job as the director of the Contra Costa Crisis Center. Representatives from a local artists guild came in to hang a new set of donated pieces, but as soon as they left, the center's staff immediately took down several of the paintings — all the ones that invoked the Golden Gate Bridge. When Bateson asked why, they explained that the sight of one of the Bay Area's most famous and most beautiful landmarks was simply too traumatic to be displayed near the center's bereavement programs, a staggering number of whose participants were grieving loved ones who'd killed themselves by jumping off it.

For Bateson, a Bay Area native, it was an eye-opening moment, one that spawned a longstanding personal and professional fascination with the bridge — the number-one suicide destination in the world, with 37 completed suicides and over 100 additional attempts last year alone. "Around here, you see the bridge all the time," he said, "but I'd never thought about the pain and suffering that's behind it." At the time, neither had many of Bateson's peers in the mental-health community: When he first began researching the issue, he said, he found that very few of his friends and colleagues knew the extent of the problem. Public awareness within the Bay Area has increased in the intervening years, thanks in part to the documentary *The Bridge*, but the topic remains taboo. "This is San Francisco's dirty little secret," he said. "It's celebrated as being the city's signature structure, but it also has a very gruesome history" — a history that Bateson aimed to reveal with *The Final Leap: Suicide on the Golden Gate Bridge*, which he'll discuss on Wednesday, April 18, at University Press Books (2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley).

John Bateson [illegible] suicide barrier on the bridge

The great strength of *Leap* is in illustrating the hundreds of lives touched by each bridge suicide: the witnesses who watch people plunge to their deaths; the Golden Gate Station Coast Guard officers who rescue the bodies — and who suffer an outsize rate of attrition because of the trauma; the coroners who perform autopsies. Bateson is a gifted writer, and he treats his subject matter in a way that manages to be uncommonly tender without ever veering into mawkishness or melodrama. But with a debate revolving around how best to address the issue, the book is as much about activism as it is about documentation. Bateson is a vociferous proponent of a suicide barrier on the bridge, and hopes that *The Final Leap* — which spends a great deal of time laying out, and efficiently knocking down, the arguments that have long been floated against the barrier — will raise momentum.

"The fact of the matter is suicide is largely preventable, and barriers on bridges have been proven repeatedly to save lives," he said. "In any other instance — if two or three people were killed a month in cable-car accidents, or if someone fell out of the deck at AT&T Park every ten days — public pressure would demand answers. ... Here we have an opportunity to change the bridge, to make it a monument to compassion in addition to beauty — but once again, public safety is being sacrificed for tourism. And until more people become aware, that'll continue to happen." 5:30 p.m., free. 510-548-0585 or UniversityPressBooks.com

— *Ellen Cushing*

LECTURES

Anna Anthropy: "Rise of the Videogame Zinesters" The videogame critic and designer discusses and signs her new book about independent and underground videogames. Wed., Apr. 18, 7 p.m., Diesel, A Bookstore, 5433 College Ave., Oakland. 510-653-9965. DieselBookstore.com.

Bill McKibben: "Organizing the Struggle for Life on Planet Earth" The author and activist discusses his book about the threat of global warming. Sat., Apr. 14, 7-9 p.m. [illegible] South Berkeley Senior Center, 2939 Ellis St., Berkeley. $10-15. [illegible]

Chris [illegible]: "[illegible] Identity" The Question Bridge artist and creator leads a conversation about the issues and themes in the Question Bridge: Black Males exhibit. Sat., Apr. 14, 1-2 p.m., free w/ admission. Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak St., Oakland. 510-318-8400, MuseumCA.org.

Daniel Boyarin: "The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ" The [illegible] professor of Talmudic Culture and rhetoric at UC Berkeley discusses his book, which challenges conventional understandings of Judaism and the origins of Christianity. Wed., Apr. 18, 6-7:30 p.m., University Press Books, 2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-548-0585. UniversityPressBooks.com.

Dr. Joel [illegible]: "The [illegible], Oakland, and [illegible] of the Oakland Zoo" The Emeritus College's 20th Distinguished Lecture. Fri., Apr. 13, 3-5 p.m., $10-$15.

Dr. [illegible]: "[illegible] Empowering Women in [illegible] Society" The microbiologist discusses how educating women in basic scientific concepts empowers them to take control of their lives and improve the health of their communities. Tue., Apr. 17, 5 p.m., Mills College Concert Hall, 5000 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland. 510-430-2296.

Dr. [illegible]: "[illegible] Empowering Women in [illegible] Society" The microbiologist discusses how educating women in basic scientific concepts empowers them to take control of their lives and improve the health of their communities. Tue., Apr. 17, 5 p.m., Mills College Concert Hall, 5000 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland. 510-430-2296.

The Ecoliteracy Project and [illegible] Institute & [illegible]: "[illegible], Fibershed, and Appropriate Technology" Rebecca Burgess reads from *Harvesting Color* and discusses Fibershed, [illegible] from the book *Green Shroud* and [illegible]. Sun., Apr. 15, 3 p.m. [illegible] Books, 6328 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-588-8[illegible].

Forum: "Dialogue about the Death Penalty: The Future of Capital Punishment in Our South" With death penalty opponent [illegible] Jeanne Woodford and Los Angeles County Deputy District Attorney Phillip [illegible]. Thu., Apr. 12, 1:30-3 p.m., Bryce Hall, 1928 Saint Mary's Rd., Moraga. (925) 631-4000. [illegible]

Jack and [illegible] Mary: "Finding Our Roads to a Just and Sustainable Future" The authors discuss [illegible] for building energy, commons, and joy. Sun., Apr. 15, 2-4 p.m., $25-$50, [illegible]. First Unitarian Church of Oakland, 685 14th St., Oakland. 510-893-0129. UUOakland.org.

Jack Norris: "The Health Benefits of a Plant-Based Diet" The Vegan Outreach co-founder discusses and answers questions about vegan nutrition. Tue., Apr. 17, 6:30 p.m. [illegible] Oakland Public Library Rockridge Branch, 5366 College Ave., Oakland. 510-597-5017. OaklandLibrary.org.

James [illegible]: "Prophecy, Divination, and Book Healing" The magician and [illegible] artist discusses the psychology [illegible] divination, and faith healing. Fri., Apr. 13, 8 p.m. Smith Center, Ohlone College, 43600 Mission Blvd., Fremont. 510-659-6031. SmithCenter.com.

John Bateson: "The Final Leap: Suicide on the Golden Gate Bridge" The former executive director of a Bay Area crisis center discusses his book about the phenomenon of suicides on the Golden Gate Bridge. Wed., Apr. 18, 5:30-7 p.m., University Press Books, 2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-548-0585. UniversityPressBooks.com.

José David Saldívar: "Trans-Americanity: Subaltern Modernities, Global Coloniality, and the Cultures of Greater Mexico" The Stanford University professor discusses his book with a panel including [illegible]. Fri., Apr. 13, 4-5 p.m. University Press Books, 2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-548-0585. UniversityPressBooks.com.

Nancy Boas: "David Park: A Painter's Life" The author is joined by [illegible] to discuss the life of the independent [illegible] painter. Thu., Apr. 12, 6-7:30 p.m. University Press Books, 2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-548-0585. UniversityPressBooks.com.

Panel: [illegible], "[illegible] Future [illegible]?" With former *New York Times Magazine* editor Gerry Marzorati, [illegible] editor Mark [illegible], and *The Nation* editor [illegible] in the [illegible] library. Mon., Apr. 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m., North Gate Hall, UC Berkeley, Berkeley.

Peter Beinart: "The Crisis of Zionism" The senior political writer for *The Daily Beast* discusses his views about how the relationship between American Jews and Israel must change. Tue., Apr. 17, 7:30-9:30 p.m., $12. BrownPaperTickets.com/event/234640. Hillside Club, 2286 Cedar St., Berkeley. 510-848-3227. HillsideClub.org.

Philip Fradkin and Alex Fradkin: "The Left Coast: California on the Edge" The environmental historian and photographer discuss their book about California and more. Thu., Apr. 12, 7 p.m., free w/ admission. Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak St., Oakland. 510-318-8400, MuseumCA.org.

[illegible]: "Towards a [illegible] of [illegible] in Medieval South India" The assistant professor of humanities at SF State discusses the literary and [illegible] work of [illegible] and Jains. Thu., Apr. 12, 5-7 p.m. Center for South Asia Studies, 10 Stephens Hall, Berkeley. 510-642-3608.

[illegible]: "Unsuitable: [illegible] for Couples" The novelist discusses and signs her new [illegible]. Fri., Apr. 13, 7-8 p.m., free-$15. Good Vibrations, 2504 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-8987. GoodVibes.com.

Rachel Maddow: "Drift: The Unmooring of American Military Power" The political commentator discusses her new book about what she considers the US' strange peace with perpetual war. Fri., Apr. 13, 8:30 p.m., $[illegible]. BrownPaperTickets.com/event/22[illegible]. King Middle School, 1781 Rose St., Berkeley. 510-[illegible].

Sabine Breitwieser: "[illegible] Witches and [illegible]: Displays for Engaging People in [illegible] Video in the Museum" The curator of media at MoMA, NY gives a talk sponsored by the Berkeley Center for New Media/Art, Technology & Culture Colloquium. Mon., Apr. 16, 7:30-9 p.m., 510-495-3585, BCNM.Berkeley.edu. [illegible] Auditorium, Sutardja Dai Hall, Berkeley.

[illegible]: "Of [illegible] and [illegible]: Life in a Civil Lines Bungalow in [illegible], 1947" The [illegible] Distinguished Professor of Ancient and Modern South Asian Studies at UC Berkeley discusses [illegible] life in 1947. Tue., Apr. 17, 5-7 p.m. Center for South Asia Studies, 10 Stephens Hall, Berkeley. 510-642-3608.

LITERARY EVENTS

All Ages, All the [illegible]: The [illegible]: Episode [illegible] [illegible] reading [illegible]. Mon., Apr. 16, 7 p.m., [illegible] Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-6500. ShotgunPlayers.org.

Anne Lamott and Sam Lamott In conversation based on her new book, *Some Assembly Required: A Journal of My Son's First Son*. Thu., Apr. 12, 1:30 p.m., $5. 510-704-8012. Piedmont Elementary, 400 [illegible] St., Oakland.

[illegible] Gray Sands [illegible] monthly prose reading. Third Tuesday of every month, 8 p.m. Arbor Cafe, 4230 Telegraph Ave., Oakland.

Autobiography and Ultimate Book Discussion Group Third Wednesday of every month, 6:30 p.m., free. Hayward Public Library, 835 C St., Hayward. 510-293-8685. Library.Hayward-CA.gov.

Book Discussion Group Discussing Rebecca Solnit's *A Paradise Built in Hell*. Mon., Apr. 16, 6:30-8 p.m., Hayward Main Library, 835 C St., Hayward. 510-293-8685, Library.Hayward-CA.gov.

California Writers Club Jannell Moon, Poet Laureate of Cloverdale, discusses how poetic elements affect all forms of writing. Sun., Apr. 15, 2-4:30 p.m., CWC-Berkeley.com. Oakland Public Library, Main Branch, 125 14th St., Oakland. 510-238-3134, OaklandLibrary.org.

Chana Wilson Presenting the new memoir, *Riding Fury Home*. Thu., Apr. 12, 7 p.m. Diesel, A Bookstore, 5433 College Ave., Oakland. 510-653-9965. DieselBookstore.com.

[illegible] The Berkeley City College Magazine with Willy Lizarraga, [illegible]. Tue., Apr. 17, 7:30 p.m. Moe's Books, 2476 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2087. MoesBooks.com.

[illegible] The [illegible] in conversation with professor Gautam Premnath, discusses her book, *The Little Book of [illegible]*. Fri., Apr. 13, 12-2 p.m. Center for South Asia Studies, 10 Stephens Hall, Berkeley. 510-642-3608.

Dennis [illegible] The journalist reads from his [illegible] *Special Ed*, [illegible]. Thu., Apr. 12, 7-9 p.m., $10-$15. La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568, LaPena.org.

[illegible] Village Book Club Discussing Alice LaPlante's *Turn of Mind*. Mon., Apr. 16, 7 p.m. Books Inc. Alameda, 1344 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-2226, BooksInc.net/ [illegible]

[illegible] Reading from the novel, *13, rue Thérèse*. Sat., Apr. 14, 7:30 p.m. Mrs. Dalloway's, 2904 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-704-8222. MrsDalloways.com.

Ericka Lutz Reading from her first novel *The Edge of Maybe*. Sat., Apr. 14, 7 p.m. Laurel Bookstore, 1423 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland. 510-531-2073. LaurelBookstore.com.

Fifth Season, [illegible] Celebrate [illegible] including Bay Area poets including Dan Bellm, [illegible], Sandra Gilbert, and more. Through Apr. 30, 12-1 p.m. Mrs. Dalloway's, 2904 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-704-8222. MrsDalloways.com.

[illegible] and [illegible] The [illegible] read from their respective works of poetry including [illegible], along with an open reading. Fri., Apr. 13, 7 p.m. [illegible] Cafe, 1854 Euclid St., Berkeley. 510-841-6374.

Book Bash and Speakeasy 33 Thursdays Open mic poetry followed at 10:30 p.m. by dancing, poetry and food. Live DJs, and more. Thursdays, 7:30 p.m., donations accepted. Eastside Cultural Center, 2277 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-533-0879. EastsideArtsAlliance.com.

[illegible] Conversation with the [illegible]. Thu., Apr. 12, 6-7 p.m., [illegible] 101 Doe Library, Berkeley. 510-642-5537.

Jon [illegible] The artist [illegible]. Fri., Apr. 13, 7 p.m. Diesel, A Bookstore, 5433 College Ave., Oakland. 510-653-9965. DieselBookstore.com.

Kathryn Harrison Reading from her novel, *Enchantments*. Fri., Apr. 13, 7:30 p.m. Mrs. Dalloway's, 2904 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-704-8222. MrsDalloways.com.

[illegible] Club Call [illegible] poetry for monthly titles. Third Tuesday of every month, 6:30-7:30 p.m., free. Oakland Public Library Lakeview Branch, 550 El Embarcadero, Oakland. 510-238-7344, OaklandLibrary.org.

[illegible] The prize-winning poet reads from her work [illegible]. Mon., Apr. 16, 7 p.m. Cal State East Bay Library, 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., Hayward. 510-885-3892.

Lyrics and [illegible] With [illegible] Paul S. Flores, [illegible], Shailja Patel, and Chelsea Martin. Wed., Apr. 18, 7:30 p.m. Pegasus Books Downtown, 2349 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley & Oakland. 510-649-1320. PegasusBookstore.com.

[illegible] and [illegible] Reading from their respective new works of poetry. Thu., Apr. 12, 7:30-9 p.m. Moe's Books, 2476 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2087. MoesBooks.com.

Public Discussion: "[illegible]" With [illegible]. Mon., Apr. 16, 7-8 p.m. Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., Albany.

Playreaders A weekly group for adults to read aloud from great plays, changing parts frequently. Meets in the [illegible] Story Room. Wednesdays, noon. Berkeley Public Library, Central Branch, 2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-981-6100. BerkeleyPublicLibrary.org.

Pre-World Book Night Reception With refreshments, readings, and [illegible]. Tue., Apr. 17, 7-9 p.m. Revolution Books, 2425 Channing Way, Berkeley. 510-848-1196. RevolutionBooks.org.

[illegible] and [illegible] The authors read from their latest [illegible]. Thu., Apr. 12, 7:30 p.m. Pegasus Books Downtown, 2349 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley & Oakland. 510-649-1320. PegasusBookstore.com.

The [illegible] [illegible]. Tue., Apr. 17, 7 p.m. Diesel, A Bookstore, 5433 College Ave., Oakland. 510-653-9965. DieselBookstore.com.

Second Saturday Soup A poetry writing workshop led by various writers. Second Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.-noon. Continues through June 8. 925-[illegible]. PoetsLane.com. Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave., Pleasanton. 925-[illegible]. PleasantonArtsFoundation.org.

[illegible] Celebrate the [illegible]. Sun., Apr. 15, 3 p.m. Books Inc. Berkeley, 1760 Fourth St., Berkeley. 510-525-7777. BooksInc.net/Berkeley.

Third Tuesday Topic Poet [illegible] Bryant leads a [illegible] poetry critique. Bring 10 copies of one or two poems for the group. Third Tuesday of every month, 7-9 p.m. Continues through June 17. 925-[illegible]. PoetsLane.com. Towne Center Books, 555 Main St., Pleasanton. 925-846-8826. TowneCenterBooks.com.

Valley of [illegible] An exhibition of a book of contemporary photographs highlighting [illegible] in the Central Valley [illegible]. Through May 15. Center for Photography, [illegible]

Buzz Downtown
for First Friday
on the Free
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BLACK OAK BOOKS STAFF PICKS

Why Nations Fail The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty

By Daron Acemoglu & James Robinson

$30.00

One of Marx's more interesting insights was that a capitalist's stage was necessary before sufficient wealth can be created to move to a more civilized state where people's needs could be taken care of. In a way, in this brilliant and very well written book, Acemoglu and Robinson show through numerous interesting historical and contemporary situations that what is really important for countries to succeed in the long run isn't "capitalism" per se but rather a special type of it they call "inclusive." Countries that become oligarchical for example with ever growing inequality eventually fail.

Published by Crown Business, 3/20/12

The Cartoon Guide to Calculus

By Larry Gonick

$18.99

Gonick is the best expositor of science and math I know. If you have ever wanted to learn calculus after a horrible experience in school, you now have a way of doing so. As someone who taught calculus for many years, I was astonished at how good the exposition is. And remember: the calculus is one of the crowning achievements of mankind. "Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night. God said: Let Newton be! and all was light."

Published by William Morrow Paperbacks, 12/27/11

Long, Last, Happy New and Collected Stories

By Barry Hannah

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Now available in paperback. This single volume contains the best four story collections of Faulkner-channeling Mississippian Barry Hannah who died way too young in 2010. It also includes five new and unpublished stories. His was a fierce and exuberant life's work; bursts with beautiful style and wit.

Published by Grove Press 12/1/11

LAUREL BOOK STORE STAFF PICKS

Abstract City

By Christoph Niemann

$24.95

In July 2008 illustrator and designer Christoph Niemann began Abstract City, a visual blog for the New York Times. His posts were inspired by the desire to re-create simple and everyday observations and scenes from his own life that everyone could relate to. In Niemann's hands, mundane experiences such as riding the subway or trying to get a good night's sleep were transformed into delightful flights of visual fancy.

Published by Harry N Abrams Inc. 4/1/12

The Art of Urban Sketching

By Gabriel Campanario

$26.99

This is both a comprehensive guide and a showcase of location drawings by artists around the world who draw the cities where they live and travel. Authored by the founder of the nonprofit organization Urban Sketchers, this beautiful 320-page volume explains urban sketching within the context of a long historical tradition and how it is being practiced today.

Published by Quarry Books 2/2/12

A God in the House

Edited by Ilya Kaminsky and Katherine Towler

$19.95

Editors Ilya Kaminsky and Katherine Towler have gathered conversations with nineteen of America's leading poets, reflecting upon their diverse experiences with spirituality and the craft of writing. Bringing together poets who are Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan, Native American, Wiccan, agnostic, and otherwise, this book offers fresh and thoughtful consideration of themes too often polarized and politicized in our society.

Published by Tupelo Press, 3/15/12

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1344 Park St.

BERKELEY

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2349 Shattuck Ave
1855 Solano Ave

Sunrise Bookshop
3064 Telegraph Ave

Tilden Nature Area Visitor Center
North Central Park Dr

Turtle Island
2982 Claremont Ave

UC Botanical Garden
200 Centennial Dr #5045

University Press Books
2430 Bancroft Way

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5433 College Ave

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4100 MacArthur Blvd

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3900 Martin Luther King, Jr.

Oakland Museum of California
1000 Oak St

Pegasus Books
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4163 Piedmont Ave

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821 4th St

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Orinda Books
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PICKS

Anna Anthropy

They're not just for Doritos-eating frat boys or failure-to-launch basement-dwellers; hey, video games have come into their own as a legitimate entertainment form, multibillion-dollar industry and experimental training ground for the next generation of artists and programmers. As such, they've spawned an entire canon of books, blogs, and 'zines, which continue to multiply rapidly. As a game designer, critic, and former editor of *The Gamer's Quarter*, Oaklander Anna Anthropy has been on the frontlines of the evolution of video games and their attendant media, all of which she discusses in *Rise of the Video Game Zinesters*, published last month and the subject of a lecture at Diesel (5433 College Ave., Oakland) on Wednesday, Apr. 18, 7 p.m., free. 510-653-9965 or DieselBookstore.com — [illegible] Cushing

Ericka Lutz

The [illegible] *of Maybe* begins with a revelation: An adult daughter, previously ignored, shows up at the Oakland home of our protagonists — a liberal couple with a teenage kid — threatening to change their way of life permanently and profoundly. *Maybe* is a finely wrought family drama that also manages to feel like a page-turner, and its settings and characters are so recognizable, well-drawn you'll feel like author Ericka Lutz — who celebrates the book's release on Saturday, Apr. 14 at the Laurel Book Store (4100 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland) — is looking over your shoulder. 7 p.m., free. 510-531-8073 or LaurelBookStore.com — *R.C.*

Rachel Maddow.

Rachel Maddow

If you [illegible] a major crush on Rachel Maddow by now you're not paying attention. Already a Rhodes Scholar, celebrated news-show host, and vaunted amateur mixologist, the Stanford alumna apparently felt that wasn't enough and decided to write a book. *Drift: The Unmooring of American Military Power* proves that Maddow isn't only one of the sharpest minds out there, but she's a bang-up writer as well. She'll discuss it at a KPFA-sponsored lecture hosted by Max Pringle at the King Middle School Auditorium (1781 Rose St., Berkeley) on Friday, Apr. 13. Tickets are sold out, but you'd be forgiven for selling your firstborn for a Craigslist find. 8 p.m., $15. KPFA.org/events — *R.C.*

World Book Night Pre-Party

Here [illegible] behind World Book Night — first celebrated last year in the UK and coming to the US on April 23 — aims to spread love of reading and books by providing preregistered "givers" with one of thirty paperback titles, to distribute as they see fit in their communities. Our very own Diesel (5433 College Ave., Oakland) is an official book pickup site, and hosts a party on Monday, Apr. 16, in honor of the occasion. Givers can stop by and grab their boxes of books, but all are invited to take part in door prizes, music, and pie, according to Diesel events coordinator John Peck. "It's pretty amazing to get to be a part of this," he said. Indeed. 6 p.m., free. 510-653-9965 or DieselBookstore.com — *R.C.*

School of Journalism, Berkeley

World Book Night Book Pick-up Party With pie, prizes, and a chance for designated WBN givers to pick up their books. Mon., Apr. 16, 6-8 p.m. Diesel, A Bookstore, 5433 College Ave., Oakland. 510-653-9965. DieselBookstore.com.

Write for Your Life Writing as meditation, whereby participants write in response to a reading at the beginning of the session. Reading aloud to the group is optional. Mondays, 9:15-11:45 a.m. Unitarian Universalist Church, 1 Lawson Rd., Kensington. 510-525-0302. UUCB.org.

Youth Poet Laureate Competition For Oakland and San Francisco residents ages 13-18. The inaugural competition results in one Youth Poet Laureate from each city, each honored with $6,000 in scholarships and more. Through May 15. Free. YouthSpeaks.org.

PUBLIC INTEREST

Alameda City Council Meeting Third Tuesday of every month, 7 p.m. Alameda City Hall West, 950 W Mall Sq., Alameda. 510-747-7400. CI.Alameda.CA.US.

East Bay Regional Park District Scoping Meeting With a discussion of the Albany Beach Restoration and Public Access Project. In the East Bay Regional Park District board room, 2950 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland. Thu., Apr. 12, 7 p.m. 510-544-2627. EBParks.org.

Free Book Exchange Give and get free books of all genres. Saturdays, Sundays, 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Free. Bay Area Free Book Exchange, 1062 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. 510-705-1301. BayAreaFreeBookExchange.com.

Free Tax Assistance Help provided by the American Association of Retired Persons. Bring copies of last year's federal and California returns and all materials pertaining to 2011 income. Mon., Apr. 16, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Temescal Public Library Branch, 5205 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-238-3434. OaklandLibrary.org.

Living Liberally: Drinking Liberally II A political discussion group. First and third Sunday of every month, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., free. Lukas Taproom & Lounge, 2221 Broadway, Oakland. 510-451-4677. LukasOakland.com.

Living Liberally: Drinking Liberally I A political discussion group. First and third Tuesday of every month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., free. Spice Monkey Cafe, 1628 Webster St., Oakland. 510-286-8070. SpiceMonkeyCafe.com.

Not at the Town: Light of the Darkness With a film screening and panel discussion with CDI president D. [illegible] Jackson and others. In the student lounge (Building F). Mon., Apr. 16, 5:30-7:30 p.m. College of Alameda, 555 Ralph Appezzato Memorial Pkwy., Alameda. 510-522-7221. Alameda.Peralta.edu.

Social Justice Committee All are welcome to attend this bi-weekly meeting in the Fellowship Hall's foyer. First and third Sunday of every month, 12:30 p.m., donations encouraged. Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists, 1924 Cedar St., Berkeley. 510-841-4824. BFUU.org.

SPOKEN WORD

15th Annual Youth Speaks Teen Poetry Slam With hundreds of young writers, emcees, and performers from the Bay Area and Northern California. Fri., Apr. 13, 5-8 p.m. David Brower Center, 2150 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-809-0000. BrowerCenter.org.

Alameda Night A showcase of rousing speakers, dancers, comedians, poets and singers, with weekly cash prizes. Ages 21 and up. Must RSVP. Sat., Apr. 14, 8-11 p.m. $10. 510-347-4848. BrownPaperTickets.com/event/240443. Venue 301, 1122 B St., Hayward. 510-629-0301. Venue301.net.

The Berkeley Slam with Gypsea Hu Hosted by Betsy Gomez, Dee [illegible], Sean, and Katelyn [illegible]. With the improvisational band [illegible] and up to $150 in cash prizes. Wed., Apr. 18, 8 p.m. $8. Starry Plough, 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-2082. StarryPloughPub.com.

The Goo Cabaret A weekly open mic for up-and-coming spoken word artists, poets, and comedians. Sign-up begins at 8 p.m. Tuesdays, 8:30 p.m., free. Dorsey's Locker, 5817 Shattuck Ave., Oakland. 510-428-1935. DorseysLocker.com.

The Golden Slam Poetry Slam and Open Mic Hosted by three-time Grand Slam Champion [illegible], featuring [illegible] the White Boots/Robertson and Jetsi, with music by DJ Enqulista. All ages welcome. Earn points to be on the 2012 Slam team. First and third Sunday of every month, 8:30-10 p.m., $5-$7. 408-508-8517. GSSlam.com. Grand Lake Coffee House, 3340 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-822-1507. GrandLakeCafe.com.

Word of the Muse Poetry series hosted by Amos White. Second Thursday of every month, 7 p.m., free. Books Inc. Alameda, 1344 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-2226. BooksInc.net/Alameda.

Poetry Diversified A twice-monthly open mic with featured readers, hosted by poetry ensemble Tres Santos. First and third Tuesday of every month, 7:30-9 p.m., free. World Ground Cafe, 3726 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland. 510-482-7983. WorldGroundCafe.com.

Second Saturday Words & Poetry Reading Poetry reading and open mic. Second Saturday of every month, 7-9 p.m. Frank Bette Center for the Arts, 1601 Paru St., Alameda. 510-523-6957. FrankBetteCenter.org.

Slam / Youth Poetry Contest A chance for kids 12-18 to perform their original poetry. Second Friday of every month, 7-8 p.m., free. Frank Bette Center for the Arts, 1601 Paru St., Alameda. 510-523-6957. FrankBetteCenter.org.

Synergy Women's Open Mic Collegial women's reading hosted by Joanne Lupton. Info: 510-532-1540. Third Sunday of every month, 3-5 p.m., free. Frank Bette Center for the Arts, 1601 Paru St., Alameda. 510-523-6957. FrankBetteCenter.org.

Written Word Art Open-Mic Night Poets, storytellers, musicians, and all other writers are invited to share their work. Arrive early to sign up. Second and fourth Friday of every month, 7:30 p.m., free. FacebookWrittenWordArt.com. Yumna BookArt.com. Zocalo Coffeehouse, 645 Bancroft Ave., San Leandro. 510-569-0112. ZocaloCoffeehouse.com.

Youth Speaks Teen Poetry Slam Open-mic with poetry and DJ music for youth poets 2[illegible]. The event is free to the public. Second Friday of every month, 7 p.m., free. Pro Arts Gallery, 150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland. 510-763-4361. ProArtsGallery.org.

CONGRATULATIONS NATE!

Express [illegible] Nate Seltenrich [illegible] second place award [illegible] feature writing from the North American Agricultural Journalists Association for his cover story "How Safe Is Your Soil?" This is a national award. Seltenrich competed against journalists from newspapers and magazines of all sizes from around the country.

Catch the story here →

EAST BAY EXPRESS

CONGRATULATIONS ELLEN!

Express [illegible] was [illegible] James Beard Foundation award [illegible] excellence in covering wine, spirits, and other beverages for her cover story "How Peet's Starbucked Itself." Cushing, who also writes the weekly column "East Cult" on the East Bay bar scene, is the only Northern California newspaper reporter to be nominated for this national award. She's also only one of two alt-weekly reporters nationwide to receive a nomination.

Catch the story here →

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We'll Be Hosting A Week's Worth of Events

Sunday, April 15, 12:30–1:30 p.m.
Vegan Cooking Demonstration with Allison Rivers Samson of Allison's Gourmet
Wellness Center, Whole Foods Market
230 Bay Place

Monday, April 16
Oakland Veg Week night on the town
Enjoy dinner at one of Oakland Veg Week's supporting restaurants listed to the right

Tuesday, April 17, 6:30 p.m.
Jack Norris, RD, speaks about the health benefits of a plant-based diet
Rockridge Branch of the Oakland Public Library
5366 College Avenue

Wednesday, April 18, 6:00–10:00 p.m.
Vegan Drinks with food by Na Ni Burger
and a special performance by Trevor Low
Vitus Oakland
201 Broadway

Thursday, April 19, 7:00 p.m.
Film Screening of *Vegucated*
Above Zza's Enoteca
564 Grand Avenue
Space is limited, please RSVP to info@oaklandveg.com

Friday, April 20, 6:30 p.m.
Nathan Runkle, Executive Director of Mercy for Animals,
will speak about factory-farming and animal welfare.
Gino Parlour Room, Preservation Park
1233 Preservation Park Way

Saturday, April 21, 2:00–4:00 p.m.
Oakland Veg Week Celebration
Lake Merritt Sailboat House
568 Bellevue Avenue
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author and vegan cook, Colleen Patrick-Goudreau
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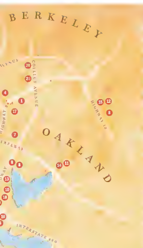

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Restaurants Offering Oakland Veg Week Specials

1 **Asmara Restaurant**
5020 Telegraph Avenue (510) 547-5100

2 **Bacheeso's**
246 Grand Avenue (510) 891-1496

3 **Bocanova**
55 Webster Street (510) 444-1233

4 **Cafe Colucci**
6427 Telegraph Avenue (510) 601-7999

5 **Chop Bar**
247 4th Street (510) 834-2467

6 **Cosecha Café**
907 Washington Street (510) 452-5900

7 **Homeroom**
400 40th Street (510) 597-0400

8 **Ike's Lair**
2204 Broadway (510) 336-6789

9 **Italian Colors Restaurant**
2220 Mountain Boulevard (510) 482-8094

10 **The Lake Chalet**
1520 Lakeside Drive (510) 208-5253

11 **Lin Jia Asian Kitchen**
3437 Lakeshore Avenue (510) 835-8322

12 **Montclair Bistro**
6118 Medau Place (510) 482-8282

13 **Spice Monkey**
1628 Webster Street (510) 268-0170

14 **YaYu Ethiopian Restaurant**
3343 Lakeshore Avenue (510) 465-9298

Restaurants That Always Offer Meat-Free Meals

15 **Amba**
6464 Moraga Avenue (510) 339-8000

16 **Breakroom Café**
300 13th Street (510) 836-3864

17 **Burma Superstar**
4721 Telegraph Avenue (510) 652-2900

18 **Encuentro Cafe and Wine Bar**
202 Second Street (510) 832-8463

19 **Golden Lotus Vegetarian Restaurant**
1301 Franklin Street (510) 893-0383

20 **Great Wall Chinese Restaurant**
6247 College Avenue (510) 658-8458

21 **Pepples Donut Farm**
6037 San Pablo Avenue (510) 205-1369

22 **Pizza Plaza**
6211 Shattuck Avenue (510) 420-1433

23 **Shangri-La Vegan**
4001 Linden Street (510) 547-1842

24 **Souley Vegan**
301 Broadway (510) 922-1615

25 **Zachary's Chicago Pizza**
5801 College Avenue (510) 655-6385

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The Freehouse pot pie's creamy insides were lush and incredibly savory

Chris Duffey

PUB GRUB FOR THE COLLEGE SET

Far from amazing, Freehouse fills a niche for UC Berkeley students

By Jesse Hirsch

The restaurant Adagia was something of a campus anomaly. Housed in a former Presbyterian church building near a row of UC Berkeley frats, Adagia went light-years beyond wraps and fro-yo: its high-concept farm-to-table fare was served in a sophisticated, burnished-wood space that dared to take itself seriously. But the restaurant struggled, and owner Daryl Ross (head of the campus mini-empire that includes Caffe Strada and the Bancroft Hotel) decided to shut it down last summer for a complete overhaul. Now it's back, and ready to party!

Freehouse is Adagia 2.0, a revamp that seems calculated to appeal to the broadest college denominator. Instead of its previous Harvard Club-style gravitas, the restaurant features chairs with a fuzzy jungle-print fabric, servers wearing T-shirts, and a lively bar (with flanking flat-screens) as the room's focal point. The huge gas fireplace, which former *Express* critic Jonathan Kauffman said instilled Adagia with a sense of history, is now surrounded by overstuffed couches and easy chairs. Younger patrons sprawl on the furniture with cocktails in hand, looking like extras from a 1980s old-school slob comedy.

Furthering the populist vibe, Freehouse's sign uses a font poached from Soviet propaganda posters, set off by a single star in the "E." Freehouse does all it can to reject any lingering pretense from its predecessor ("I never really had a connection with Adagia — I didn't go to places like that," Ross admitted to the *Daily Cal*). Reservations are no longer accepted. Everyone seats themselves. And, by gosh, the food is less high falutin.

The new menu has three no-frills, bro-friendly categories: Bites to Start, Bites Between Bread, and Main Bites (contrast Adagia's comparatively fey Grazing, Land, Ocean, and Farm and Pasture). Expect pub faves like wings and burgers, but with delicate accoutrements like herb-marinated tomatoes, chipotle creme fraiche, and julienne mint. Pulled pork comes with jicama slaw; wings are served with organic radish. Farm shout-outs are minimal, though the fine print shows they use sustainable ingredients when possible: "Not because everyone else does it, but because it is the right thing to do." Okay then.

Chef Kevin Kroger last worked at Monk's Kettle, an upscale beer bar in San Francisco's Mission District. Freehouse shares a similar sense of priorities with this other spot: the massive beer list and the dinner menu battle for your attention. After my visits to Monk's Kettle, memories of the indistinct food always seemed to wash away in a river of imported lager. The food at Freehouse was more memorable, but not always for the right reasons.

A vegan mushroom club used a distinctive chocolate-and-cinnamon base, but pockets of coldness distracted me (and the dish's quick arrival indicated a microwave-reheat). Two side orders of fries were served at room temperature. The over-grilled Loch Duart salmon was discolored and shrunken, lost inside its big Acme bun like a kid in his dad's suit. I ordered a grass-fed burger, but got a lamb patty instead. Still, I decided not to send it back — I felt sporting by my second pint — but I should have returned it for being overdone. (Ordered medium rare, it lacked any hint of pink.)

Blandness plagued some other items. Rich cheddar pilsner sauce failed to make a doughy food-court pretzel interesting. A seasonal soup of puréed fava beans, snap peas, and asparagus seasoned with mint oil and lemon creme fraiche (possibly the most Adagia-esque item I tried) was unexpectedly flat. The beer-poached mussels were juicy and tender, served in a broth with diced tomato, garlic, shallots, and fresh herbs, but its seasoning was barely detectable.

The menu did hold a few pleasant surprises. Savory black-bean cakes made a nice opener served on a tall bed of corn salsa that was good enough to eat on its own. A textured white bean cassoulet came with a crispy Parmesan bread-crumb topping and ovals of grilled bread on the side. Generous amounts of applewood-smoked bacon, sausage, and duck confit almost upstaged this dish's mirepoix foundation, but fat from the meats infused it with a deeply rewarding richness.

The Freehouse pot pie is built on a conventional base of carrots, onions, celery, turnips, and peas, but its main ingredient is switched out regularly. Truffles took the limelight when I visited: a surprisingly upscale centerpiece for a $12 dish. Like the meat in the cassoulet, the mushrooms' potent flavor pervaded its accompanying gravy. The biscuit-like top crust was thin and crumbly, but the creamy insides were lush and incredibly savory.

*Service ebbed and flowed at Freehouse. Sometimes it seemed like we had four servers working in tandem to create a dazzling Carnival Cruise-level of eye contact and attentiveness. Then it would drop off for long periods, and I would wonder when we were getting water or when my friend would get some silverware. Our dirty dishes hung out for so long after the meal I briefly wondered if it was a bus-your-own-table restaurant.

But I have to say: Applying the typical restaurant critic standards here makes me feel a bit fussy. Even though it's Adagia's replacement, and its menu shows a bit of ambition, Freehouse is essentially a college brewpub. It's a place that was closed for spring break when I recently arrived to review it, and that's physically attached to a student-housing complex. As one commenter on Chowhound put it, Freehouse "is NOT a destination. But it's very much a welcomed addition to the campus options."

As such, Freehouse is successful. It's a good-looking, offbeat space to hang out in, like a cocktail party in a church. The food isn't great, but it gets the job done. Price points are low, with few items running over $12. And you don't have to stray far from school. ●

Jesse.Hirsch@EastBayExpress.com

Freehouse

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Sample Menu

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Beer-poached mussels	$12
Black bean cakes	$8
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Cassoulet	$14

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WHAT THE FORK

A DOUBLE DOSE OF SPICE

OB's Cafe is known for its irascible owner — and its delicious food. Plus a Bakesale Betty manager breaks into the scone business.

By Jesse Hirsch

OB's Cafe may be a fantastic restaurant, but the owner isn't interested in your praise. A food writer friend tipped me to this tiny Cajun spot in Old Oakland, saying that he "didn't want to take credit or blame" for the suggestion. Intrigued, I did my Internet due diligence. The OB's website is a slick Mardi Gras party with Flash animation, zydeco music, and a curious slogan: "There really is such a thing as Southern hospitality which comes with a certain attitude that says 'Calm down and enjoy yourself.'"

Online reviews tell a more nuanced story. On one hand, you have scores of one-star reviewers, telling tales of OB's irascible owner berating them or kicking them out for minor infractions like asking for a menu or a glass of water. Comments like "He threatened to kill a customer!" and "The Soup Nazi is a saint compared to this guy!" paint a bleak picture.

On the other hand, you have five-star reviewers gushing about the best shrimp and grits since they left Louisiana, calling the formidably named chef/owner (Juventino De La Cruz De Marfulleda, aka OB) a Van Gogh in the kitchen, and describing his catfish as "life-altering." Between the five-star reviews and the one-star reviews is very little middle ground. You couldn't keep me away.

I stopped by with my friend Christo on a recent Tuesday afternoon, feeling a potent mixture of hunger and fear. Inside the wee space, a TV blared some daytime drivel, a woman kvetched on a hot-pink phone while sipping coffee through a straw, a grad-student type read a book and drank grape Shasta, and a large man sat glued to the TV.

When we approached the counter, the big man barked, "What do you want?" without looking up. "Ah... lunch?" OB gruffly ordered us to sit down. He seemed put out.

Besides a small lending library of cheap horror books and textile manuals, there weren't many niceties at OB's. We didn't get water. We had to find menus in a stack near the entrance. It was loud, yet weirdly desolate. When OB approached for our order, he stood there without a word, only grunting after we placed our orders. When I asked if I could get a po-boy to go, he said "No," and walked away.

And the prices! Fourteen dollars for a po-boy was the low end, scaling up to almost $20 for the priciest lunch items.

Christo and I waited quietly (afraid of doing anything to earn OB's ire) while the chef went to town in the kitchen. Everything was prepped via hot plate, griddle, and toaster oven. Lemons were squeezed. Pinches of spice were thrown. Liberal amounts of cream were poured. I smelled bacon frying up.

After half an hour of preparation, we were served a terrific meal. My shrimp and grits had an ample base of creamy cheddar-laced grits, sticky but not lumpy, and mounds of plump shrimp and bacon in a lemony Bayou gravy. Christo's gargantuan jambalaya was red hot and garlicky, with tender white chicken, Andouille sausage coins, and a savory blend of Cajun spices. We were insanely full but couldn't stop eating.

OB's Cafe: not for the sensitive. Jesse Hirsch

After we finished, OB said he was going to charge me for eating off my friend's plate. I protested, then detected a slight twinkle in the eye (not so gruff!). As he was ringing me up — no plate-sharing surcharge — OB explained he didn't sell po-boys to go because they'd be awful when you get them home. I also learned that OB's Cafe has been there for ten years.

Ten years. Despite totally unpredictable hours, high prices, no ambience, and customer service that ranges from reticent to outright hostile, OB's Cafe has kept plugging along for a decade in Old Oakland. At essence, the main asset is really great food. Looks like that's enough.

OB's Cafe, 729 Washington St., Oakland; 510-208-9696

Scones on the Side

Bakesale Betty's production manager Shawn Walker-Smith is an accomplished professional baker, but his day job is more administrative than hands-on. When he told then-pregnant owner Alison Barakat that he missed getting his hands in the flour, she fiercely insisted he start up a side business. "I was not about to argue with a pregnant woman," laughed Walker-Smith.

His new venture, TART? Bakery, is now fully operational, pumping out eight or nine dozen scones a week for sale at Arbor Cafe in Temescal. He makes his baked goods after-hours in the Bakesale Betty ovens, just barely keeping up with demand.

Last week I requested a couple of cranberry orange raisin scones to be set aside for pickup at Arbor Cafe. When I dropped by, the baristas asked for ID. "We wanted to keep them for ourselves!" Arbor had run out for the day, and with good reason; the buttery, moist scones were a perfect balance of tart and sweet.

Despite high demand, Walker-Smith has no plans to expand production, saying he needs to balance TART? with his work at Bakesale Betty. You can purchase his scones at Arbor Cafe, at Bakesale Betty during Art Murmur, or you can get larger batches by special order.

TART? Bakery, 510-532-7266, TartOakland.com

Arbor Cafe, 4210 Telegraph Ave., Oakland ●

Jesse.Hirsch@EastBayExpress.com

This column is culled from our blog of the same name.

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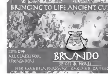
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RESTAURANTS & CAFES

Brewpubs and Eateries Near Campus

Babette
2625 Durant Ave., Berkeley 510-684-3656. Babette is an anomaly in its genre: a museum cafe that's not mediocre. Tucked inside the Berkeley Art Museum, this hip little spot is a marvel of chic-meets-homey, perfect for the gallery-weary savant who needs a place to nosh and revive. The food is a rotating menu of farm-to-table done well, a suitable complement for the institution that hosted Chez Panisse's 40th anniversary bash. The final irony of this winning museum cafe is that some of its customers wander in off the street completely unaware that it's connected to BAM. $

The Crossroads
2415 Bowditch St., Berkeley 510-643-6121. It's Berkeley's biggest restaurant, and you've probably never heard of it. Its fare spans the world. Its portions are limitless. Occupying UC Berkeley's first certified-green building, Crossroads is the university's largest student dining facility, but nonstudents can also eat here for a nominal fee. An all-organic salad bar and ever-present cereal bar augment a wide selection of choices at every meal; a typical Friday-night dinner included salmon, boeuf bourguignon, "blackened" tofu steaks, spelt salad, thick-crust pizza, curried corn, dill-with-feta, and brown rice. Vegan and vegetarian items are denoted with special signs. Drink stations offer milk, sodas, coffees, and teas; a frozen-yogurt dispenser flanks a case filled with freshly made desserts, many of them vegan. Don't you dare call this "institutional food." $

Henry's Publick House & Grille
2600 Durant Ave., Berkeley 510-809-4132. The gastropub concept (bars that prepare and serve top-shelf grub) comes to Berkeley in the form of this handsomely renovated and newly reconfigured UC hangout. Outstanding bar snacks include nine-spice roasted nuts and hummus, spicy turmeric-ginger mushrooms; more substantial fare includes an exemplary Cuban sandwich, a zesty grilled steak salad Niçoise, and the spiky, satisfying Angry Mac and Cheese. Among the imaginative house cocktails are a refreshing grapefruit-infused negroni and the Hot Flash, Herradura tequila jazzed with mint, cilantro and ginger beer. The stone fruit-berry crumble makes a fine summertime dessert. $$

International House
2299 Piedmont Ave., Berkeley 510-642-9490. A self-defined and tried experiment in global fellowship, International House is home to 600 mostly foreign UC Berkeley students. Its dining hall is Southside's best-kept secret, because for the price of your average burger-Coke-and-fries, nonresidents can eat to utter repletion here. Try quaffing a wide range of international dishes, from channa masala to vegan goulash to coq au vin to Jell-O in the columned refectory or on a sunny patio flanked, Riviera-style, by citrus trees. $

Jupiter
2181 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-843-8277. Just a stone's throw from UC Berkeley, the local talent checks itself out at this upstairs-downstairs-and-outdoors pub washing down wood-fired pizza, focaccia sandwiches, and salads with the outpourings of 32 taps, including 9 brews made right here. A crackling open fire on the patio out back perfumes the air for a city block, helping make this a first-date lure. $$

Kiraku
2566B Telegraph Ave., Berkeley 510-848-2758. Izakayas, the Japanese restaurants serving snacks, items to munch on while you down beer and sake, have been in full bloom for awhile in San Francisco. But in the East Bay Kiraku's owners Daiki and Sanae Saito feel like pioneers of the form. That's not to say they're izakaya purists — they add European, Chinese, and Korean flair to their stable of bar nibbles. This tiny spot has become a late-night favorite for off-work local chefs, hungry for diverse and compelling items like New Zealand deer sashimi, foie gras daikon, and sweet tea blancmanger. But take caution: Like tapas, Kiraku's small plates can quickly add up to a big bill. $$

Maoz
2399 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley 510-356-4090. Here you'll find bargain-priced vegetarian (and mostly vegan) fast food that's low in oil and sugar and that you basically assemble yourself based on your own preferences. Founded by an Israeli husband and wife in Amsterdam in 1991, Maoz is a fast-growing fast-food chain with about 25 branches on two continents. The format, menu, and recipes in each Maoz restaurant are almost exactly the same: When you order a Salad Box, you are given a receptacle containing a handful of lettuce and five tasty super-fresh falafel balls. Onto this you pile, salad bar-style, nearly a dozen different house-made toppings, from flash-fried cauliflower to grilled-red-pepper salsa. Order a falafel sandwich — featuring your choice of chewy white or whole-wheat pita — and you can come back and pile on the toppings as many times as you like. $

Mount Everest Restaurant
2598 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley 510-843-3951. Friendly neighborhood hangout serves a few Nepali specialties as well several Indian standards, some of them delectable, others on the so-so side. Opt for the hot, juicy momos; the crunchy samosas; the smoky chicken chhoila; the mildly spiced cauliflower-potato aloo gobi; and bhatura, a pillowy fried bread served with spicy garbanzos. The honey-drenched naan makes a fine dessert. Brief beer and wine list, uninspiring high-ceilinged industrial storefront setting. $$

Norikonoko
2556 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley 510-548-1274. Slide open the wood paneled door to step into this funky, family-run restaurant that serves some of the East Bay's most authentic Japanese food. Tempura and sukiyaki are just the start of a menu that includes less-familiar dishes like grilled rice skewers, mountain potato, and grilled fish marinated in sake. Every compartment of the bento-box dinners is filled with tiny, immaculately arranged compositions of pickles, salads, braised vegetables, and sculpted rice. And the staffers treat you like one of their own. $$-$$$

Pepes Pizza
2516 Durant Ave., Berkeley 510-843-0999. Costing less than round-trip BART fare from Berkeley to San Francisco, this pizza/salad/taco buffet might be the best deal in town. The salad bar offers a vat of iceberg, another of assorted greens, and a dozen-plus more bearing other components. Five pizzas with meat toppings, five without, plus outrageous butter-brushed sweet pizza, are refreshed and replaced every fifteen minutes. A nacho machine and taco bar expand the majesty with beef, refried beans, sour cream, salsa, chopped veggies, and shredded cheese. Cold-drink machines disgorge twelve different beverages, and soft-serve ice cream comes in two flavors. A gigantic flat-screen TV airs sports constantly — which is distracting — but rugs absorb much of the sound, so you can actually relax here. The price is certainly relaxing. $

San Francisco Soup Company
2512 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 510-848-7768. The San Francisco Soup Company is many things it's not supposed to be: Soup-to-go. And ... soup, which is hot and wet and must be consumed by careful spoonfuls while sitting or at least standing still — as fast food. But it works. The East Bay restaurants in this rapidly increasing chain serve delicious soups from an ever-shifting menu of more than eighty varieties, including many organic, low-carb, and gluten-free versions.

Q: What does cruising through the Napa Valley Wine Country in a **burgundy BMW convertible** and a **short BART trip to the East Bay** have in common?

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RECENTLY REVIEWED

Rotten City Pizza

6613 Hollis St., Emeryville, 510-655-2489. Emeryville's reigning pizza champ is a hybrid, merging the New York-style slice aspirations of Brooklyn-born Jonas Bernstein with the Cal-cuisine pedigree of Chef John Streit (Pizzaiolo, Pizzeria Delfina). The basics don't quite hold up, with the thin crust on the margherita not able to withstand the thick coating of sauce. But once Streit starts working his magic on the combos, look out. The Calabrian pizza is a can't-miss, with a house-made Italian sausage (ground with paprika, fennel, and Berkshire pork shoulder), Gaeta olives (striking, though milder than a Kalamata), potent Calabrian chilies, and a sprinkling of toasted fennel seeds. $$

B-Side BBQ

3303 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, 510-595-[illegible]. B-Side is the newest [illegible] from Brown Sugar Kitchen's perennially popular Tanya Holland, in the old Yardie Jerk space on San Pablo Avenue in West Oakland. Holland has no barbecue-specific experience, but her broad resume serves her well in carving out some new culinary territory. B-Side's brisket is exemplary, as are its sides and barbecue chicken, but the ribs never quite match up to expectations. Nothing is ground-breaking, but it's still a very tasty addition to the area's slim offerings of quality barbecue. Meats come from Niman and other quality purveyors. $$

Brasa

1960 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-868-0735. In the same space formerly occupied by their popular restaurant eVe, chef-owners Christopher and Veronica Laramie now serve rotisserie chicken along with rice bowls, juicy hot sandwiches, and other street foods of Veronica's native Peru. Fueled by a range of richly assertive peppers, Peruvian cuisine has spent centuries soaking up the flavors of Spain, France, Asia, Africa, and indigenous peoples. Peruvian street food is messy, meaty, smoky, saucy, satisfying, and faintly familiar, like Grandma's cooking reconfigured by a drunken sailor or a crazy teenager. The French fries are inside the steak sandwich. Sides include salads and sweet-potato fries, but tofu inside a roll or atop white rice is the only vegetarian entrée. Can Niman Ranch beef hearts win your heart? Brasa is a fun, friendly, affordable place to find out. $

Caña

530 Lake Park Ave., Oakland, 510-832-1515. Cuban food is all too rare in the Bay Area, and Caña Cafe does it well, serving up Cuban sandwiches, fried chicken, and empanadas with equal aplomb. But veteran chef Diego Salinas has bounced around at high-end fusion restaurants, and at Caña Parlor he's adding fusion and nouvelle techniques to the pan-Latin fare. The resulting combination, of the light and airy daytime cafe's authentic Cuban street food, and the nighttime parlor's fancy fusion, is an interesting dichotomy. Both are good, but Salinas' traditional street food is more consistently strong. $$

Babette

2625 Durant Ave., Berkeley, 510-642-3046. Babette is a near-anomaly in its genre: a museum cafe that's not mediocre. Tucked inside the Berkeley Art Museum, this tiny little spot is a marvel of chic-meets-homey, perfect for the gallery-weary savant who needs a place to nosh and revive. The food is a rotating menu of farm-to-table done well, a suitable complement for the institution that hosted Chez Panisse's fortieth-anniversary bash. The final irony of this winning museum cafe is that most of its customers wander in off the street, completely unaware that it's connected to BAM. $

Haven

44 Webster St., Oakland, 510-663-4440. The latest outpost of Daniel Patterson's burgeoning empire fails to match the hype, despite the star power of chef Kim Alter (Ubuntu, Manresa). The Jack London Square post-warehouse design has some cool touches, and much of the menu is plated beautifully. Yet service often falters, many dishes are served with basic errors, and other items are overwrought and fussy. It's possible that Haven may streamline its service and menu issues, but at price points this high, no one wants to play the guinea pig. $$$

and many incorporating all-organic ingredients. San Francisco Soup Company's salads and wraps are not to be overlooked either. The wraps especially are almost big enough to comprise two meals each, and the Rainbow Wrap is a showhorse delight with candied walnuts, organic greens, and roasted beets. $

Sunny Side Café

2136 Oxford St., Berkeley, 510-845-9900. Helming the kitchen is a classically trained, self-described "Eco-Chef" Aaron French, who traveled the world studying fragile ecosystems before becoming a full-time chef at the original Sunny Side on Solano Avenue. The Berkeley restaurant opened in 2009, offering breakfast, brunch, and lunch with an eye to seasonality and sustainability. Among a wide range of sandwiches, egg dishes, and other daytime-dining classics, spotlights include crispy-outside home fries and small versions of eggs Benedict topped with house-made Hollandaise. French's signature dish is the Alameda ham (or other savory ingredients) sandwiched between two French-toast slices, topped with two eggs, Hollandaise, and a balsamic reduction. $$

top dog

2534 Durant Ave., Berkeley, 510-843-5967. top dog will make you remember why the all-beef frank made America great. The "top" is a slightly smoky, firm, toasty sausage, not a smelly overprocessed weenie. Sausage lovers will find everything from bratwurst to soy dogs to hot links; skip the bland turkey sausage, though. A late-night favorite with Cal students — especially since everything costs less than $5. $

Up & Under

[illegible] W. Richmond Ave., Point Richmond, [illegible]-778-1313. North America's first rugby pub serves up substantial and often tasty grub in a wonderfully raucous setting. Filet mignon sliders, the five-sausage platter, the pulled-pork sandwich, and cheesy scalloped potatoes are among the standouts; other dishes are on the heavily breaded side. Get the Muddy Cleat (molten chocolate cake with chocolate sauce and chocolate ice cream) for dessert. The pressed-copper ceiling, hand-[illegible] redwood tables, and wall-to-wall rugby paraphernalia are eye-catching, to say the least, while the Wednesday night pub quiz is loads of fun. Hurray: family-friendly dining. $$

Vitus

901 Broadway, Oakland, 510-452-1600. Vitus has the design sense of a baroque mansion and the cubic footage of an airplane hangar with the seedy undertones of an old Vegas strip club. With live music most nights of the week, it seems an unlikely spot for dinner. Everything is budget-priced. Lucky is the late-night reveler who stumbles onto fennel-rubbed Niman pork ribs or Rocky chicken sliders for five bucks. $

Price Key

Price codes assume diners will order a main course and beverage, share appetizers and desserts, and tip adequately. $ — up to $10 per person; $$ — $10-$25; $$$ — $25-$50; $$$$ — more than $50.

LAST CALL

HAPPIEST HOUR

Adesso's new *aperitivo*: less chaotic but no less commendable

By Ellen Cushing

Believe it or not, the most insane happy hour in the East Bay was, until recently, not at a sticky-floored Cal-student hangout or one of downtown Oakland's notorious dives, but in fact, a nicely appointed, eternally beloved Piedmont Avenue *salumeria*. I'm talking, of course, about Adesso and its above-and-beyond-the-call-of-duty happy hour, which quickly became a cult favorite. I went there the summer after the restaurant first opened with a friend who'd just returned from a semester in Rome, raving about the constant joys of *aperitivo* — a sort of magical Italian fold in the space-time continuum during which everyone drops what they're doing for cocktails and free food — and suitably impressed. At Adesso's version, a constant cavalcade of ever-changing items were laid out on a back counter and replaced, as if by magic, just at the exact moment when they ran out.

However, with the trough-like setup and the genteel people of Piedmont Avenue jostling and pawing for free salami, it's easy to see why the restaurant had to rejigger the concept recently, getting rid of the self-serve element and replacing it with table service — to guard against the inevitable flatbread-related riot, to preserve Adesso's quietude, or perhaps to give all of us something to look forward to in the afterlife. Either way.

Actually, the free-for-all is said to still live at the bar's well-loved late-night happy hour — 10:30 to 11:30 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and 11 to midnight Thursday through Saturday — but the evening version (5-6 p.m., Monday through Saturday) may be even better. The elimination of the buffet has had a marked and positive effect on the noise level and crowdedness factor, and, after all, a place can't be everyone's secret hideout for too long before it becomes no one's. Though Adesso's new happy hour is slightly less insane than Adesso's old happy hour, it is nonetheless still pretty insane: a big bucket of leafy, lightly-dressed microgreens, a heap of cheesy-buttery-toasty-delicious bread, a perfectly golf ball-size portion of duck liver pâté, served unprompted and for absolutely free on a pretty plate in an unaccountably charming setting, and along with a menu of damn near-perfect drinks.

There's a bunch of local beers on draft and in bottles and a multipage wine list, but better yet, Eric Quilty is the sort of bartender whose drinks sneak up on you. Peach-colored and cherry-garnished, the esperanza (Del Maguey Mezcal Vida, roasted yam-infused Cocchi Americano, cinnamon, bitters, $10) looks like a girlie cocktail but goes down like something much more substantial, and the relative simplicity of the five-ingredient billionaire cocktail (Baker's 107 bourbon, grenadine, lemon, absinthe bitters, simple syrup, $10) belies an intense and complex drink, one that reveals itself in waves — pleasantly insane, or maybe just insanely pleasant.

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FOOD & WINE

CULINARY & WINE

Berkeley Wine Festival Covenant Cellars' [illegible] shares the cellar's sauvignon blanc, merlot, and reserve wines from Napa Valley. Wed., Apr. 18, 6:30 p.m. $125. BerkeleyWineFood[illegible]. Claremont Hotel Club & Spa, 41 Tunnel Rd., Berkeley. 510-843-3000. CovenantFood.com.

Blue Bottle Coffee Cupping Taste Blue Bottle's newest roasts and learn what makes them unique. Tuesdays, Sundays, 2-3 p.m. free. Blue Bottle Coffee, 300 Webster St., Oakland. 510-653-4063, BlueBottleCoffee.net.

[illegible] Outdoor Bay World Chocolate Tasting With a guided tasting of pork and imported chocolates and a discussion about the chocolate's history and health benefits. RSVP required. 888-327-2757. Sun., Apr. 15, 7-8:30 p.m. $15-$17. Crab Cove, 1252 McKay Ave., Alameda. 510-544-2750, EBParks.org.

Cooking Basics and Tasting with [illegible] Learn how to make vegan Ethiopian food and use Ethiopian spices. At the [illegible] Culinary Studio inside [illegible] Market, 1550 Mandela Pkwy., Bay [illegible] Oakland. E-mail info@[illegible] to RSVP. Mon., Apr. 16, 6:30 p.m., [illegible].com.

Kevin Feinstein, "Wild, Foraged, and Indigenous Foods" The co-author of *The Bay Area Forager: Your Guide to Edible Wild Plants of the San Francisco Bay Area*, along with other experts, discussions and booths, samples of wild edible foods. Sat., Apr. 14, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. free. Saturday Berkeley Farmers' Market, Center Street at Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley. 510-548-3333, EcologyCenter.org.

Cooking Class: The Market: [illegible] Part two of a three-part veggie cooking workshop. Sat., Apr. 14, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. free. 510-201-1742, PhatBeetsProduce.org. North Oakland Farmers' Market, Arlington Market Center Parking Lot, Oakland.

Oakland Veg Week With veggie cooking demonstrations, book discussions, films, and more at participating Oakland eateries. Apr. 1-29. OaklandVeg.com.

Off the Grid A weekly food truck gathering on Shattuck Avenue at Rose Street, Berkeley. Wednesdays, 5-9 p.m.

Organic Wine Tasting Stem Tree Vineyards, Sante's African Cuisine, and Frog & Fiddle, and live music by Alan Kenny & the Fiddlers. Tue., Apr. 17, 6-8:30 p.m. $40. Frog & Fiddle, 1544 Webster St., Alameda. 510-522-3784, FrogAndFiddle.com.

Pop-up Fridays Stop [illegible] a non-profit, non-retail [illegible] Oakland [illegible] spotlights a rotating selection of Taylor's Sausages. Plus local food and wine at participating [illegible]. Fridays, 1-3 p.m. Continues through May 20. Swan's Marketplace, 538 9th St., Oakland. Swanshw.com.

Sausage-making Workshop Learn how to make sausages from pork and lamb. Sun., Apr. 15, 7-8:30 p.m., $78. The Local Butcher Shop, 1600 Oakland Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-6328, TheLocalButch[illegible].com.

Stomping Girl Wines Spring Oakland Party Taste newly released 2016 Stomping Girl Rosé [illegible] and assorted cheeses and charcuterie, meet the winemakers, and have a wine pop-quiz. Sun., Apr. 15, 2-5 p.m. $15. BrownPaperTickets.com/event/2330021. Solano Cellars, 1580 Solano Ave., Albany. 510-525-9463, SolanoCellars.com.

"Tagine" Moroccan Pop-up Night With Moroccan food specialty by chef Zouhair Karam. Every other Thursday, 6-11 p.m. Guerilla Cafe, 1620 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-2233, GuerillaCafe.com.

Market Wine Market Saturdays, Sundays, 1-6 p.m. $5 or free w/ purchase. Urbano Cellars, 2323 Fourth St., Berkeley. 415-806-7155, UrbanoCellars.com.

Vegan Specialty Demonstration With Allison Rivers Samson, [illegible] contributor and [illegible] of Allison's Gourmet. E-mail info@OaklandVeg.com to RSVP. Sun., Apr. 15, 12:30-1:30 & 2:30-3:30 p.m. OaklandVeg.com. Whole Foods Market Oakland, 230 Bay Place, Oakland. 510-834-9800, WholeFoodsMarket.com/stores/Oakland.

Vegan East Bay Drinks With socializing, food by No No Burger and live music by Damian Law. Wed., Apr. 18, 8-10 p.m., OaklandVeg.com. Vitus, 201 Broadway, Oakland. 510-452-0071, VitusOakland.com.

FARMERS' MARKETS

Alameda Farmers' Market With locally grown fruits and vegetables, plus family activities. Tuesdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. free. PCFMA.com. Alameda Farmers' Market, Haight Ave. at Webster St., Alameda.

[illegible] Farm Fresh Market Community Stand Farm Fresh Choice runs produce stands in [illegible] neighborhoods. Tuesdays, 3:30-6:30 p.m. free. 510-843-4764. EcologyCenter.org. Berkeley Youth Alternatives, 1255 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-845-9010. BYAonline.org.

[illegible] Farmers' Market With locally grown and produced fruit, vegetables, bread, pies, arts, and more. Accepts WIC and EBT. Sundays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. free. 510-535-6939. Fruitvale Village, 3401 E. 12th St. (at Fruitvale BART), Oakland. 510-534-8690, UnityCouncil.org.

Grand Lake Farmers' Market The weekly Market boasts more than 70 producers, prepared foods, and arts and crafts vendors. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. free. 800-897-3276, SplashPad.org/farmersmarket. Splash Pad Park, Grand Ave. and Lake Park Ave., Oakland. 510-238-7275, OaklandNet.com/Parks/Parks/Default.asp.

Hayward City Hall Farmers' Market A farmers' market featuring locally grown and produced foods from more than 55 Market [illegible] and specialty food purveyors. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. free. 800-897-3276, AgriculturalInstitute.org. Hayward City Hall Plaza, 777 B St., Hayward. 510-583-4000, Ci.Hayward.Ca.Us.

Kensington Farmers' Market With a [illegible], organic [illegible] food products, fresh wild fish, fruits and vegetables, nuts, butters, bread, cheese, fresh pasta, and seasonal surprises. The Market and [illegible] live music and [illegible]. Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. free. 510-847-0801, KensingtonFarmersMarket.org. Colusa Circle, at the Colusa [illegible], Kensington.

Laurel Market Farmers' Market [illegible] organic [illegible] and [illegible] called the Purple [illegible]. Sat., 10 a.m.-2 p.m. free. 510-482-[illegible], FoodCommunityCulture.org. Laurel Farmers' Market, 4173 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland.

Montclair Village Farmers' Market With organic produce and specialty [illegible]. Free [illegible] in Village garage at La Salle Avenue. Sundays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. MontclairVillage.com/[illegible]. Downtown Montclair Village, LaSalle and Moraga Aves., Oakland.

North Berkeley Farmers' Market [illegible], specialty foods, all-organic produce, and more for sale, along with special programs and events. [illegible]. Thursdays, 3-7 p.m. 510-548-3333, EcologyCenter.org. Shattuck Ave. & Rose St., Berkeley.

North Oakland Arlington Oakland Farmers' Market [illegible] products sold by [illegible]. Accepts WIC and EBT. Saturdays, [illegible] a.m.-3 p.m. free. PhatBeetsProduce.org. North Oakland Farmers' Market, Market Center Parking Lot, Oakland.

Old Oakland Farmers' Market Offers seasonal produce, meats, fish, other organic foods, along with samples. Fridays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Old Oakland Farmers' Market, 9th St. between Broadway and Clay St., Oakland. [illegible].

Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Jack London Square Farmers' Market With seasonal [illegible] greens, etc., fresh baked breads, [illegible] flowers, specialty [illegible] Market and more. Sundays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. free. PCFMA.com. Jack London Square, 88 Broadway, Oakland.

Richmond Farmers' Market With locally grown fruit, live chickens, eggs, and other produce. Fridays, [illegible] p.m. free. RichmondFarmersMarket[illegible]. Richmond Farmers' Market, 24th St. & Barrett Ave., Richmond.

Saturday Berkeley Farmers' Market With fresh and organic produce, specialty foods, and more for sale, special programs and events. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. free. 510-548-3333, EcologyCenter.org. MLK Civic Center, 2151 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley. 510-981-5150, Ci.Berkeley.Ca.Us/[illegible].

Temescal Farmers' Market California [illegible] Farmers of [illegible] offers fruits and nuts, fresh [illegible], baked breads, locally caught fish, flowers, and more. Sundays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. free. 510-745-7100. [illegible] Lot, 5300 Claremont Ave., Oakland.

Tuesday Berkeley Farmers' Market [illegible] and organic Market [illegible], breads, [illegible] foods and more, plus special programs and events. Tuesdays, 2-6:30 p.m. [illegible] 548-3333, EcologyCenter.org. [illegible] (at Martin Luther King Jr. Way), [illegible].

Youth-Led Farm Stand The fresh [illegible] stand in the heart of the [illegible] neighborhood features selections from regional farmers and select gardens, along with foods, dry goods, nutrition-related [illegible]. At [illegible] Mandela Blvd., Oakland. [illegible] p.m., free, FoodCommunityCulture.org.

PICK

Wild Foraged and Indigenous Foods Celebration

At the Berkeley Farmers' Market (Center St. at Martin Luther King Jr. Way) on Saturday Apr. 14, a Wild, Foraged, and Indigenous Foods Celebration features free samples galore while spotlighting some of the local wild produce that Native Americans ate centuries ago. Kevin Feinstein (aka Feral Kevin) of the Foraging Society will introduce his book *The Bay Area Forager*, Tim Stoller will explain how to harvest and prepare wild seaweed, Kyra Epstein will discuss her handmade herbal teas, and Emilia [illegible] will discuss the syrup she made from local elderberries. Emily [illegible] will present her book *Living Wild*. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. 510-548-2220 or EcologyCenter.org. — *Anneli Rufus*

MOVIES

CABIN FEVER

Spend some time at *The Cabin in the Woods*. But pay no attention to the *Damsels in Distress*

By Kelly Vance

The alpha-male jock, the nice guy, the sexy playgirl: *The Cabin in the Woods*.

Writer-producer-director Joss Whedon is known to the larger entertainment world primarily as the originator of the multi-platformed *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* property. But to diehard fans of fantasy and horror he's the slickest thing since foam latex prosthetic appliances, a mini-industry unto himself. Since the movie version of *Buffy* in 1992, the 47-year-old Whedon has had a hand in *Toy Story*, *Alien Resurrection*, the *Angel* and *Dollhouse* TV series, and the upcoming Marvel-ized putative tentpole *The Avengers*. His fondest creation, though, has always seemed to be the eternal teenage staker-out-of-territory Buffy. However, Dana, the heroine of *The Cabin in the Woods*, may give Buffy some serious competition.

Whedon and frequent collaborator Drew Goddard evidently cooked up *The Cabin in the Woods* as a sort of horror spoof they could show at SXSW (that crowd eats up rural zombie scenarios), and that would also serve as a lead-in to the main summer gun, *The Avengers*. Whenever we hear the words "horror spoof" we instinctively want to run away, because it usually means someone is trying to cover up an inept horror flick by labeling it as a parody. Happy to report that *The Cabin in the Woods* is smart, even haphazardly profound in spots. Geeks will gobble it up, of course, but there's quite a bit of character gristle left for the rest of us in there amongst the remains.

Five collegiate-aged friends take their RV into the woodsy hills for some relaxation at a depressed-looking little homestead, and terrible things begin to happen to them, one by one. Oh merciful lord, how many times have we heard that setup? One of the rituals involved in watching this type of movie is deciding the order in which the characters drop off. Who's going to get eviscerated first? Will it be Curt, the alpha male jock played by Chris Hemsworth (*Thor*)? Or Holden (Jesse Williams), the nice guy? How about Jules (Anna Hutchison), the sexy playgirl who French kisses a stuffed tiger's head during a game of Truth or Dare?

There's an unmistakable feeling — from the first reel camera-shot count — that Dana (Kristen Connolly) is destined for bigger things, so that leaves Marty (Fran Kranz), the stoner comic relief, as the odd man out. We can't help playing a game with these characters' fates, knowing full well that most if not all of them are going to end up skewered, burnt, or otherwise eliminated in the course of things. That's the way it's done.

Cue undead hillbillies, bear traps, scythes, signs and portents, etc., etc. Speaking of games and rituals, there's something else going on in *The Cabin in the Woods*, something that lifts it up into another level of perversity in which co-writer Whedon and director Goddard get to romp unfettered in the fields of fantasy — some of it more obvious than it needs to be. But still. We won't discuss it further. Other reviewers might, but not this one. Suffice it to say that if "more is more" describes you, you'll dig the last quarter. Every monster that ever was. Unfortunately, many of the very concepts that make *The Cabin in the Woods* worth discussing are the ones that need to be kept under wraps, so as not to spoil it for audiences. Maybe we'll revisit the discussion at a later date.

Special kudos to Connolly, the latest in what seems like an unbroken string of interesting female avengers prowling the nation's multiplexes, and to Kranz as the target and a prime determinant, the lackadaisical but insightful slacker Marty. Bradley Whitford and the wonderful Richard Jenkins as a pair of jaded technocrats who really need to get out in the sun contribute greatly to one of the few open-ended slasher/horror pics of recent memory. The J-horror parody is also terrifically funny if you know the subject. Whedon & Co. obviously have more fun with this genre than most people, and their cabin is our cabin for 105 minutes.

The Cabin in the Woods

Directed by Drew Goddard. With Kristen Connolly and Fran Kranz. Opens Friday

Damsels in Distress

Written and directed by Whit Stillman. With Greta Gerwig and Analeigh Tipton. Opens Friday

Whit Stillman came out of nowhere — well, Harvard, New York City, Spain, and careers in journalism and movie sales — to make *Cosmopolitan* in 1990, and indie-film aficionados tripped over themselves to shower it with praise. The light drama showed us the thoughts and opinions of a group of privileged, WASP-ish Manhattan young people as they partied after a debutante ball. There was nothing at the movies quite like it. The writer-director followed that with *Barcelona* and the estimable *The Last Days of Disco*. The world was his oyster.

Then Whitman disappeared for thirteen years, living in Europe and reportedly working on film projects that never reached stateside. Now he's back, with a college comedy called *Damsels in Distress* that's as flat and awkward as his first three projects were effervescent. He should have kept his hand in the game all those years. Time seems to have passed him by.

At fictional Ivy-ish Seven Oaks College, a clique of prim and catty female students negotiate the typical satirical university terrain — selecting mates, jockeying for status, drinking, complaining about uncouth frat boys ("that awful nerd odor"), choosing the right soap, etc. — but with a self-consciousness that surpasses anything in *Cosmopolitan*, and dialogue so arch and epigrammatic that the conversation abruptly stops and starts with each new pronouncement. At times it sounds exactly like a vintage educational PSA.

We can accept stilted or archaic language in a movie — the Coen Bros.' *True Grit*, for instance — so long as there's a narrative payoff in sight. *Damsels in Distress*, nominally about the social progress of Violet Wister (Greta Gerwig) and her friends Lily (Analeigh Tipton), Rose (Megalyn Echikunwoke), and Heather (Carrie MacLemore), gets trapped in the thickets to no particular point. It's fun for the first few exchanges, but wears off quickly.

Gerwig, celebrated priestess of mumblecore (*Greenberg*, *Baghead*), looks out of place in Stillman's trapped-in-amber character study. We prefer her when she's adorable, even though she has the talent to repeat the dialogue convincingly. Thousands couldn't. Watching *Damsels in Distress*, our thoughts drift away to filmmaker Eric Rohmer's portraits of young people searching for romance, their vulnerability and brave fortitude. Compared to Rohmer's characters, Violet and her circle are a row of billboards. By the time the movie peters out, we've already graduated. ●

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MOVIES & THEATERS

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OPENING

Applause From the way and sense, Thea [illegible] is primed to explode. And so keep waiting ... for the whole length of director Martin Zandvliet's exhausting, rewarding character study — for has-been alcoholic actress/lone mom Thea (played to within an inch of her life by Paprika Steen) to [illegible], either in the midst of her chosen family or on stage, as she portrays Martha in a production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* She seems to constantly loathe herself. Her young sons, completely estranged, regard her as if she's [illegible]. All we can do is stand her with our [illegible]. [illegible] demolition derby of an acting job by Ms. Steen, a charter member of the Dogme 95 film [illegible] in Denmark. Screenplay by Zandvliet and [illegible] August. With Michael Falch as Thea's sympathetic ex-husband. (87 min.) (K.V.)

Bully Well-meaning but pallid documentary aims to [illegible] with a [illegible] of five individual young bullying victims, the [illegible] its publicity [illegible] bullying crisis. The message: People who care should stand up and band together to protect the persecuted. When should be [illegible]. The doc's given is wonderful [illegible] sampling ... all the picked-on kids are [illegible] residents of rural communities. Surprisingly, director Lee Hirsch's doc was [illegible] (thus limiting its audience) because the MPAA threatened to slap an "R" on it for language any schoolkid in the country hears every day. (94 min.) (K.V.)

The Cabin in the Woods Sort of a postmodern *Scooby-Doo*, this horror film by *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* collaborators Joss Whedon and Drew Goddard [illegible] a [illegible] story of five college kids being hunted by zombies in the idle location and [illegible] white-collar technocrats (Richard Jenkins, Bradley Whitford) [illegible] the slaughter from a NASA-type [illegible] center. Because the first [illegible] is so [illegible] (which turns out to be the point), most of the amusement derives from trying to figure out what the control one is all about. [illegible] but the [illegible] one-two punch of [illegible] and meta-movie [illegible] should have the fanboys [illegible], [illegible] Whedon produced. (95 min.) (J.J.)

Damsels in Distress Writer-director Whit Stillman returns to the screen after a thirteen-year absence and finds the scene much changed. Unfortunately for him (creator of the wonderful *Cosmopolitan* and *The Last Days of Disco*), he's still using that [illegible] and epigram spouting for his story of a tight clique of coeds navigating the [illegible] gene pool at a [illegible] college back East. Who would have imagined we'd see Greta Gerwig as a prim, brittle bundle of nerves? And who supposed Stillman's once-delightful dialogue [illegible] so [illegible] to our enjoyment of what essentially is a piece of game entertainment? Violet (Gerwig) and her [illegible] aren't people, they're a row of billboards. Costarring Analeigh Tipton, Carrie MacLemore, and Megalyn Echikunwoke. (99 min.) (K.V.)

The Lady Arguably not [illegible] biopic of Burmese democracy figurehead Aung San Suu Kyi gives [illegible] a chance to display her character acting [illegible] as the title [illegible] gives up her family life in England to return to her [illegible] homeland and enter a twenty-year campaign for human rights and [illegible] government. It's a [illegible] to be [illegible], [illegible] but ultimately to be put away and forgotten, or perhaps [illegible] in a traffic [illegible] like a statue. It doesn't [illegible] the spirit. It barely breathes. That's the fault of director Luc Besson (*Angel-A*, *Leon: The Professional*, *La Femme Nikita*), fully aware he's framing the [illegible] of an important world figure. But he and screenwriter Rebecca Frayn never seem to get under the skin of their subject. The episodic story [illegible] them. [illegible] Costarring David Thewlis as Suu Kyi's husband. British [illegible]

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M&T

[illegible] Ave. (127 min.) (KV)

Lockout The [illegible] French [illegible] begins with a [illegible] of Guy Pearce sitting in an interrogation room, [illegible] with a [illegible] joke, gets slugged in the face [illegible], but just won't stop. The movie is a pretty good foretaste of the movie that follows: it's [illegible], ridiculous, and very entertaining. In the year 2079 the U.S. has built an [illegible] penal colony in space [illegible] prisoners are placed in suspended animation ([illegible] logic is not the movie's strong suit). After the prisoners get loose, a human rights advocate (Maggie Grace) who happens to be the daughter of the U.S. president gets taken hostage, and the [illegible] offer to drop his charges [illegible] Pearce [illegible] if he'll go rescue her. (95 min.) [illegible]

Monsieur Lazhar A quiet, tender Algerian immigrant named [illegible] Lazhar (played by French [illegible] actor Fellag) [illegible] and a [illegible] of [illegible] schoolchildren trying to deal with the loss of their beloved teacher, who hanged herself in that very classroom during recess one day. It'd be great if M. Lazhar were the greatest teacher in the world [illegible] but he's a [illegible] he [illegible]. That's what [illegible] Canadian filmmaker Philippe Falardeau's [illegible] so gratifying [illegible] classroom performances by Émilien Néron, Sophie Nélisse, and Fellag. Falardeau's screenplay is adapted from a stage play by Évelyne de la Chenelière. (95 min.) (KV)

The Three Stooges Farrelly Brothers-helmed version of the classic series. Written and directed by Peter and Bobby Farrelly; and starring Sean Hayes, Will Sasso, and Chris Diamantopoulos. (92 min.)

We Have a Pope Immediately after [illegible] in [illegible] by the College of Cardinals, the new Pope ([illegible] Michel Piccoli) turns AWOL, and loses himself amid the "real world" of contemporary Rome because he [illegible] to think it over. [illegible] audiences may also want to [illegible] the relevance of filmmaker Nanni Moretti's quiet, ever-so-slightly skeptical drama, which scores points with the [illegible] of a non-believing [illegible] psychologist (played by Moretti himself), struggles to [illegible] the new pontiff's state of mind, who [illegible] volleyball tournament in St. Peter's courtyard. Are we more fascinated by a [illegible] who would [illegible] a Chekhov play than pontificate? Meditate on that while watching this subtle character study [illegible] by [illegible], Francesco [illegible] and Federica Pontremoli. (102 min.) (KV)

ONGOING

21 Jump Street [illegible] the [illegible] remake of the '80s/early-'90s TV cop series [illegible] young [illegible] cops in a high school, there's [illegible] of two actors and their careers. One thread [illegible] Jonah Hill, [illegible] "fat nerd" [illegible] from Superbad and Moneyball, trying to [illegible] image. The other is about Channing Tatum, the jock hunk from The Vow and The Eagle, who's learning to [illegible] comedy [illegible] Channing wins, Hill stalls. Two [illegible] young-male-fantasy-land [illegible] doing car [illegible] and Ice Cube [illegible]. Biggest [illegible] since 2005 [illegible] they're all PC now. Directed by Phil Lord and Chris Miller, the team who gave us Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs [illegible] with screenwriter Michael Bacall, adapted from the [illegible] Depp TV show. (110 min.) (KV)

Act of Valor [illegible] we get just [illegible] obligatory scenes of [illegible] family life, [illegible] Navy SEALs is a [illegible] good adventure filled with [illegible] violence and derring-do. Just don't go too deeply [illegible] "world-wide jihadists" attempting to sneak into the U.S. [illegible] of bad guys. [illegible] filmmakers Mike "Mouse" McCoy and Scott Waugh's [illegible] military [illegible] screenwriter Kurt Johnstad [illegible] clutch your popcorn [illegible] tightly, [illegible] That's their job, and they're obviously good at it. [illegible] McCoy and Waugh [illegible] commercials for the Navy. The [illegible] active-duty SEALs. Spoiler: The good guys win. (101 min.) (KV)

American Reunion The [illegible] in the [illegible] American Pie series finds Jim, Stifler, and the gang [illegible] high school reunion. Written and directed by Jon Hurwitz and Hayden Schlossberg; starring Jason Biggs, Alyson Hannigan, Tara Reid, Chris Klein, and Seann William Scott.

Casa de Mi Padre Will Ferrell and his [illegible] producer Adam McKay (Anchorman; Talladega Nights) go south of the border for this mock spaghetti western, which is spoken in Spanish and subtitled. The [illegible] Diego Luna and Gael García Bernal of Y Tu Mamá También (2001) as [illegible] drug dealers, which might [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible] drug [illegible]. Director Matt Piedmont and writer Andrew Steele, veterans of Ferrell and McKay's "Funny or Die" [illegible] a big-screen tribute to the genre [illegible] some [illegible] life: a [illegible] Peckinpah-style showdown, a [illegible] crashing to the mountains [illegible]. If the project [illegible] for every [illegible] Ferrell fan who [illegible] understand English, there [illegible] who can't understand subtitles. (84 min.) (KV)

Coriolanus Ralph Fiennes [illegible] his new [illegible] with this thrilling update of the Shakespeare tragedy, now imagined as a contemporary drama of [illegible], martial law, [illegible] in a [illegible] Rome, [illegible] footage and a full [illegible]. Winner of the actors' [illegible] is probably Vanessa Redgrave [illegible] as the ambitious [illegible] General Marcius Coriolanus (Fiennes). [illegible] Gerard Butler [illegible] Brian Cox also [illegible] effect. [illegible] Fiennes makes good use of the [illegible] of Serbia, Montenegro, and the UK, as well. Fine screenplay adaptation by John Logan (Hugo, Rango). (122 min.) (KV)

Dr. Seuss' The Lorax This [illegible] 3D musical update of Dr. Seuss' [illegible] series [illegible] to bring [illegible] back to [illegible] with the added 21st-century [illegible] (voice of Rob Riggle) [illegible]. That's [illegible] as the voice of the Lorax, [illegible] with Ed Helms as Once-ler, Betty White as Grandma Norma, and Zac Efron as Ted [illegible]. So what if [illegible] 3D is [illegible]? The [illegible] Ken Daurio and Cinco Paul wrote the screenplay, adapted from Dr. Seuss' 1971 [illegible] book. (94 min.) (KV)

Footnote Israeli [illegible] this 2011 [illegible] to the Academy Awards, and one might [illegible] a [illegible] middlebrow [illegible] story if the [illegible] weren't [illegible] middlebrow [illegible]. A [illegible] Talmudic [illegible] at Hebrew University (Shlomo Bar Aba) [illegible] his son (Lior Ashkenazi of Late Marriage) [illegible] long-simmering [illegible] after [illegible] that he's won the prestigious [illegible] Prize [illegible]. Writer-director Joseph Cedar's understanding of the [illegible] of academic [illegible] — there's an [illegible] scene in a tiny conference room [illegible] — helps him [illegible] into the movie [illegible]. In Hebrew with subtitles. (103 min.) [illegible]

Free Men French actor Tahar Rahim gives an understated [illegible] performance as Younes, an Arab immigrant [illegible] fighter during the German Nazi occupation of Paris in WWII. The [illegible] by [illegible] Ismaël Ferroukhi and Alain-Michel Blanc. In

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the rescue of large numbers of Jews and French Resistance members by the mosque of Paris, Si Kaddour Ben Ghabrit (played by Michael Lonsdale). But the strongest tone is set by Younes' transformation. The traditional Algerian and Moroccan music is also a major plus, featuring Mahmoud Shalaby as an Arab singer with more than one hidden [illegible] compares with Jean-Pierre Melville's war film *Army of Shadows*. (99 min.) (K.V.)

Friends With Kids A funny thing happens when the seemingly lightweight TV-sitcom-style ensemble piece moves from Upper West Side New York. City provides a glossy [illegible] our eyes into something funnier and more satisfying than a standard chick flick. That's a tribute to actress-writer-director Jennifer Westfeldt (*Kissing Jessica Stein*). In the role of a yuppie [illegible] Julie, who arranges to have a baby with her [illegible] Jason (Adam Scott), [illegible] without getting married, and [illegible] child-rearing [illegible]. We can see the denouement coming, but along the way Westfeldt, Scott, Jon Hamm, Kristen Wiig, Chris O'Dowd, Maya Rudolph, and Edward Burns are given plenty of room for characterization, plus intelligent dialogue. The strategy pays off. (107 min.) (K.V.)

Hugo A Martin Scorsese children's movie, with all that implies. The [illegible] elements [illegible] much of a fuel for the lead character, an orphaned teenage boy who lives in the walls of a 1930s-era Paris train station, maintaining the station's clocks. Scorsese's main concern is young Hugo's (Asa Butterfield) mission to repair [illegible] (Ben Kingsley), a gloomy shopkeeper who just might be the great early-film fantasy director Georges Méliès living out his life in obscurity. So *Hugo* isn't very much for kids. It's intended for [illegible] Scorsese, and he provides plenty of fuel for the cult, with gorgeous clips from [illegible] shots [illegible] 3D impressions of a film-lover's Paris. [illegible] with able character bits by the moody [illegible], Emily Mortimer, Christopher Lee, and Sacha Baron Cohen as the comically menacing station inspector. Screenplay by John Logan, adapted from the novel by Brian Selznick. (127 min.) (K.V.)

The Hunger Games [illegible] from the [illegible] young-adult novel [illegible] gladiators fighting [illegible] of a televised spectacle in the [illegible] Gary Ross (*Pleasantville*) [illegible] and [illegible] effects that [illegible] high-concept blockbusters, and cinematographer Tom Stern [illegible] with Clint Eastwood, [illegible] drama and scenes of hand-to-hand combat, [illegible] of close-ups, with a [illegible] camera. With [illegible] Lawrence, Woody Harrelson, and [illegible] (142 min.) (B.S.)

The Island President Documentary following then-President Mohamed Nasheed of the Maldives, who, after bringing democracy to the island nation, is forced to fight an even bigger battle — climate change, which threatens to drown the country, the lowest-lying in the world. Directed by Jon Shenk. (101 min.)

Jeff, Who Lives at Home The standard Duplass [illegible] Jay and Mark Duplass have [illegible] (*The Puffy Chair*, *Baghead*) owed much of their charm to the [illegible] of nonpro ensemble actors, but the brothers are now bankable enough to attract (and want) Hollywood stars. *Cyrus* (2010) worked beautifully because its three leads [illegible] C. Reilly, Jonah Hill [illegible] the brothers' low-key improvisatory style. The same can't be said of this follow-up effort, whose credibility is ruptured by a [illegible] Ed Helms (*The Hangover*). Jason Segel plays the title character, a good-hearted stoner who sees mystical connections in random coincidences; Helms is his selfish and [illegible] brother. Judy Greer the brother's fed-up wife, and Susan Sarandon the men's [illegible] mother. There are some funny scenes in which the two brothers spy on the wife, who may be having an affair, but the movie's thrust is a badly executed attempt to satisfy Jeff's notion of personal destiny. (83 min.) (K.V.)

Jiro Dreams of Sushi Food art in monastic quality, rendered with a fine, [illegible] sushi chef, whose ten-seat restaurant in a Tokyo subway station is a world-renowned destination for customers seeking the elusive "perfect piece of sushi." According to documentary-maker David Gelb's [illegible] profile, the 85-year-old [illegible] Jiro [illegible] is a [illegible] perfectionist who is never quite satisfied with his craft. And as we watch him [illegible] his daily menu — [illegible] and serving the [illegible] — we're ready to [illegible] he's the last of a dying breed of purists. Foodies will devour this. (81 min.) (K.V.)

John Carter The late Woodshill, a gold-hunting [illegible] people to the Old West (Taylor Kitsch), gets [illegible] magically transported to the planet Barsoom (aka Mars). [illegible] and a sexy warrior-princess named Dejah Thoris (Lynn Collins). With the emphasis on the [illegible] the effect is strangely pleasing. That's partly because of the [illegible] "futuristic" conceptions the Martians use — the story originates as part of a series of fantasy novels by Edgar Rice Burroughs, circa 1912-1940s — and mostly because of director Andrew Stanton's skill in [illegible] the most of far-fetched sci-fi entertainments, e.g., *WALL-E* and *Finding Nemo*. [illegible] the unfortunate [illegible] of the [illegible] green, tusk-faced Tharks in one [illegible] Mark Andrews and Michael Chabon wrote the screenplay, [illegible] from Burroughs' *A Princess of Mars*. (132 min.) (K.V.)

Mirror Mirror Live-action [illegible] tale of Snow White, starring Lily Collins as the eponymous [illegible] and Julia Roberts as her evil-queen nemesis. Directed by Tarsem Singh [illegible] from the famed Brothers Grimm fairytale by Melissa Wallack and Jason Keller; also starring Armie Hammer and Sean Bean.

Pina 3D [illegible] for non-fans of dance, this 3D (!) performance documentary profile of choreographer Pina Bausch and her Tanztheater Wuppertal ensemble provides a spectacular show of movement and stagecraft. [illegible] Wim Wenders (*Buena Vista Social Club*, *Wings of Desire*) [illegible] captures the imaginative Bausch's startling set pieces in *The Rite of Spring* and *Café Müller* and [illegible] theme [illegible] with a dry Teutonic sense of [illegible]. The [illegible] and the nearby [illegible] in general, form [illegible] by Thom [illegible] min.) (K.V.)

Project X Documentary-style [illegible] a group of high-school [illegible] which, of course, quickly [illegible] Directed by Nima Nourizadeh [illegible] and [illegible] Brown and [illegible] Jason Cooper, and [illegible] (88 min.)

The Raid: Redemption [illegible] action-extravaganza. A few [illegible] out [illegible] finding [illegible] of gravel. A Jakarta SWAT team [illegible] gangster's headquarters [illegible] to fight its way out. Meanwhile, [illegible] way out of Gareth [illegible] which [illegible] "long-lost brother" [illegible] stars as the alpha cop [illegible] (the punch-ups) with Ray Sahetapy [illegible] Joe Taslim [illegible] min.) (K.V.)

Safe House In this big-budget [illegible] Washington plays a CIA agent turned-whistleblower who is [illegible] the protection of an [illegible] Ryan Reynolds — but the [illegible] quickly [illegible] and both men are forced to [illegible] all along. Directed by Daniel Espinosa, written by David Guggenheim; also with Vera Farmiga and Brendan Gleeson. (115 min.)

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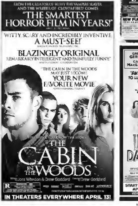

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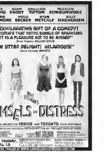

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Salmon Fishing in the Yemen A sheikh (Amr Waked) with an inordinate fondness for fly-fishing (he owns a castle in Scotland) initiates a [illegible] scheme to import [illegible] salmon from the UK to [illegible] Yemen, with the help of an [illegible] consultant (Emily Blunt) and a [illegible] government fish expert (Ewan McGregor, [illegible] playing a Scot, a rarity for him). [illegible] Lasse Hallström's [illegible] [illegible] romantic comedy is the chemistry between Blunt and McGregor, and the [illegible] Simon Beaufoy's [illegible] dialogue. Kristin Scott Thomas also makes good use of her [illegible] (111 min.) (KV)

The Secret World of Arrietty A lonely, sickly [illegible] boy named Shawn discovers Arrietty, a tiny teenage girl, as he recuperates in a country house. She's one of the "Borrowers," a race of miniature people who live under the floorboards and [illegible] household items from the "beings," and their budding friendship is disaster from the start. [illegible] This charming yet basically pessimistic animated tale from Japan's Studio Ghibli is written by Ghibli mastermind Hayao Miyazaki (Spirited Away) with Keiko Niwa, and co-directed by Hiromasa Yonebayashi and Gary Rydstrom, with [illegible] American version (there's a separate UK version). It's probably the quietest, quirkiest, and most melancholy tale in the Ghibli canon, despite the [illegible] of Carol Burnett as Haru, the capriciously cruel housekeeper. As [illegible] [illegible] may wander off. The idea is to slow down, listen, and observe. What a novelty. Starring the voices of Bridgit Mendler (Arrietty) and David Henrie (Shawn). The screenplay is adapted from Mary Norton's previously [illegible] novel *The Borrowers*, with the American [illegible] by Karey Kirkpatrick. (94 min.) (KV)

A Separation Trouble develops when a female household caregiver (Sareh Bayat) arrives at the home of a Tehran family with [illegible] to help [illegible] husband and father Nader (Peyman Moadi) take care of the grandfather, an Alzheimer's patient. Turns out both the patient and the new employee [illegible] [illegible] other issues with their families, [illegible] that require adjudication by the [illegible] religious authorities. And so, writer-director Asghar Farhadi sets us on a meandering, nerve-wracking, ultimately worthwhile tour of contemporary Iranian urban life, very much in the style of early Abbas Kiarostami, in which every single item of [illegible] resolution meets with a determined [illegible] [illegible] hardly surprised, the way lead to [illegible] (123 min.) (KV)

Titanic 3D Don't go to this movie for the [illegible] awkward dialogue, nor for its bit-by-bit recreation of 1912 [illegible] Billy Zane and Italian immigrant [illegible] [illegible] Go for the obvious reason: to see a gigantic ship sink agonizingly slowly in icy Arctic waters, sending 1,500 people to their deaths — and now in 3D. James Cameron's epic is a disaster film for the ages, with a thrilling second act that more than compensates for Leonardo DiCaprio's [illegible] performance as a bottom [illegible] [illegible] romantic fling with rich man's fiancée Kate Winslet. [illegible] hard story, is it the rumored $300 million price tag [illegible]? Yes, give or take a few mil, and it's safe to say they [illegible] [illegible] to pop and the water [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Separation trying to board the few lifeboats, writer-director Cameron achieves his vision grandly. The [illegible] [illegible] the character [illegible]. Frances Fisher, Kathy Bates, Jonathan Hyde, [illegible] (195 min.) (KV)

Tyler Perry's Good Deeds Comedy [illegible] [illegible] (played by writer-director Perry) who falls for a member of his office's cleaning crew (Thandie Newton). (111 min.)

Wrath of the Titans Ugly as this is, it's better than the first installment, the 2010 [illegible] of *Clash of the Titans*. A decent cast — Liam Neeson, Rosamund Pike, Ralph Fiennes, Édgar (Carlos) Ramírez, Bill Nighy, Danny Huston — gets [illegible] in Ancient [illegible] with a lot of [illegible] and gooey monsters. Something about the Greek gods who are [illegible] to be [illegible], getting [illegible] in the blood of their [illegible] struggle against their [illegible] [illegible] the Titans. [illegible] Perseus (Sam Worthington) to rescue his father Zeus, the suddenly [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] with the husband [illegible] [illegible] Liebesman seems to be having fun, too. But it's hard to see. (99 min.) (KV)

ONE-NIGHT STANDS

THURSDAY, APRIL 12

The Blood of a Poet (55 min., 1930). With live music by UC Berkeley student DJs, [illegible] Cine/Sign (Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, 1:30)

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg (91 min., 1964). In French with English subtitles. Cerrito Classics (Rialto Cinemas Cerrito, El Cerrito, 1:00)

Food Stamped (60 min., 2010). (Jewish Community Center [illegible] 1:30)

PICK

Monsieur Lazhar

A quiet, humble Algerian-born émigré named Bachir Lazhar (played by French comic actor Fellag aka Mohamed Fellag) comes to the aid of a classroom of Montreal middle-schoolers trying to deal with the loss of their beloved teacher, who hanged herself in that very classroom during recess one day. It'd be great if M. Lazhar were the greatest teacher in the world and could easily soothe the kids' anxieties, but he's a fallible human being after all. That's what makes Canadian filmmaker Philippe Falardeau's warm, tidy character study so gratifying — that, alongside aptly restrained performances by Émilien Néron, Sophie Nélisse, and Fellag. Falardeau's sensitive screenplay is adapted from a stage play by Évelyne de la Chenelière. (94 min.) — *Kelly Vance*

FRIDAY, APRIL 13

Caught (88 min., 1949). Dark Past: Film Noir by German Emigrés (PFA, 7:00)

Criss Cross (87 min., 1949). Dark Past: Film Noir by German Emigrés (PFA, 8:50)

[illegible] (110 min., 1987). Paramount Movie Classics (Paramount Theatre, Oakland, 8:00)

SATURDAY, APRIL 14

Tiny Tiki Tights (100 min., 1968). In [illegible] with English subtitles. The Library Lover: The Films of Raúl Ruiz (PFA, 6:00)

[illegible] (74 min., 1958). Spherical Movies: The Memory of Mars (PFA, 8:00)

The Rocky Horror Picture Show (100 min., 1975). With a live performance by Barely Legal. (Landmark Albany Twin, Albany, 11:45)

SUNDAY, APRIL 15

The Suspended Vocation (93 min., 1977). In French with English subtitles. The Library Lover: The Films of Raúl Ruiz (PFA, 6:00)

Dark City (97 min., 1950). Dark Past: Film Noir by German Emigrés (PFA, 8:35)

TUESDAY, APRIL 17

El [illegible] (126 min., 1921). Spherical Movies: The Memory of Mars (PFA, 7:00)

Rigoletto (290 min., 2012). In Italian with English subtitles. Royal Opera Live (Grand Lake Theatre, Oakland, 11:30 a.m.)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18

[illegible] (93 min., 2011). Documentary Voices (PFA, 7:00)

[illegible] (71 min., 2008). Preceded by potluck and social hour at 6:30 p.m. [illegible] Humanist Hall, Oakland, 7:30)

The End of the Line (85 min., 2008). Environmental Emergency Film Night (Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists, Berkeley, 7:00)

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FRI-SAT-SUN: 12:30 3:45 7:00 10:10
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TITANIC 3D (PG13)
FRI-SAT SUN: 11:30 3:30, 7:30
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THE NEW MUSIC MOGUL

Oakland's latest generation of movers and shakers wants to help create a cohesive hip-hop scene — and have a party in the process

By Ellen Cushing

It's past midnight on a Wednesday and Mike Melero is just getting started. Standing in an alcove-turned-control room that's roughly the size of most bathrooms, he's fiddling with knobs, drinking a Cobra, shooting the shit with the other dudes who are also crammed into the tiny space, and, of course, obsessively checking Twitter — all part of a weekly podcast he runs with a loose collection of Oakland-based DJs, producers, promoters, and musicians called Trill Team 6.

Actually "podcast" might not be the right term. It's more like a party, one that just happens to be broadcast on the Internet via a beat-up laptop — as Melero would tweet the following day, "I hope t/he last boy express people left my house before I blacked out and started a knife fite. #trillteam6" (We did, sadly.) Elsewhere in the smallish, sparsely decorated, fluorescent-lit, West Oakland space Melero shares with a couple of friends, there's a stack of bikes leaning against a wall, a dozen or so empty beer bottles piled in a corner, a lone unpeeled onion resting dolefully on the floor. It smells unmistakably like weed.

Believe it or not, this tableau may be about as close a thing that there is to the Oakland hip-hop scene's version of a power meeting, and then, guys are its locus of influence: between the people in the room and the rest of Melero's ever-expanding group of collaborators and friends — some of whom fall into Trill Team 6, others of whom are involved with Melero's regular roving party, Sick Sad World, still others who are just friends — there's a surprisingly large sphere of influence. Collectively, they know everyone (including, full disclosure, my boyfriend, who is a friend and occasional collaborator of Melero's), are everywhere, and are somehow involved with everything. They throw multiple shows a week and attend even more and boast a vast ecosystem of associated acts, including Elephant and Castle, Yells, SAFE, Uncle Ruky, Religious Girls, R&E Millionaires and Twin Steps. And

Marshall Brooks, Mike Melero, and Albert Luera throw shows together. Alex Torres

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though it's a diverse group in every sense of the word, pretty much all of them share a few important characteristics. They've got polyglot tastes, prodigious Internet presences, and perhaps most importantly a seemingly indefatigable interest in partying. In a city that's long lacked a cohesive hip-hop and dance scene, and in an era in which the world of entertainment is increasingly fractured, something in Oakland seems to be crystallizing, and it's largely because of Melero and his friends — even if they didn't necessarily set out to make it that way.

"I don't think we were ever really trying to influence a lot of people's tastes," Melero said a few days after the podcast over drinks at Radio, where he hosts a monthly DJ night — the aptly titled BOoze WaZi — under the name Bobby Peru. Raised in Gilroy and San Jose, Melero is slight and super-friendly with a big beard and a laconic slang-filled speech pattern. He doesn't have a day job and goes out every night in a typical week. "Honestly, I just love hearing my favorite jams hella loud. It's like my favorite thing."

"Yeah," said Albert Luera, aka NETO187, Melero's slightly quieter analogue, also a DJ and central member of Trill Team 6. "It's really a very selfish thing of like 'I wanna hear that song or see that band.'" That's a big part of why they decided, along with fellow DJs GnMMyBeAR and Spaceghost, to start hosting Sick Sad World. Though major venues like The Fox Theater attract big-name acts, many clubs and warehouses book garage and metal, and there's still a decent number of clubs showing mainstream and hip-hop, Luera and Melero long struggled to find places to play or see the kind of music they like — a specific, eclectic, hyperactive blend of hip-hop, pop, rock, electro, and R&B. "We felt like there's a lot of interesting music coming out right now, and there's this mesh scene," Luera said, "but we didn't know of any parties or venues attached to it." Sick Sad World began as little more than a residency at Merchant's Saloon, but has since grown to attract hundreds of people to various West Oakland warehouses whenever it happens, and for good reason. It's a sweaty, sloppy, Adderall high of a live event, spanning a broad swath of the musical spectrum. Melero's a big fan of ambient and electro; Luera's into straight-ahead hip-hop; Trill Team 6-er Gabe Santos (aka Pony Loco) has a serious soft spot for cumbia; and seemingly everyone shares a love of Nineties R&B — you'd be hard-pressed to find an iteration that doesn't invoke Ignition (Remix) at least once or twice). Tables are danced on, clothing taken off, bottles passed around, and from the vantage point of the dance floor it's easy to see why all this works so well. These guys, especially Melero, have elevated having a good time to a para-professional pursuit, and they are insanely good at it.

Event Details

Bobby Peru, NETO187, Uncle Nicky, Stripper Glitter, and Avalon Emerson play at BOoze WaZi at Radio (435 13th St., Oakland) on Saturday, Apr. 14, 9 p.m. Free.

Of course, it's a bit more complicated than that, and it helps that they got in at the right moment, and in the right place. As many members of the creative class continue to be priced out of San Francisco, and as warehouse culture continues to thrive, Oakland is fertile ground for a diverse, DIY-oriented music scene like the one these guys are creating. As Luera explained, it's hard not to meet people when every other house on your block is throwing regular shows, and cross-pollination is natural when, say, there's a noise act playing next door, a heavy metal show a few houses over, and a hip-hop set going down across the street.

For example, he said, take a recent show: "There's SAFE" — Chris Lilley and Jesse Haddon's garage-R&B project — "and then there's Twin Steps, which is like surf punk, and then there's this gangsta rap dude. They wouldn't book that at The Knockout."

The Internet, too, has enabled them greatly, allowing low-budget operations like theirs to get their parties out better and easier than their forebears (the reason they promote so aggressively online, Luera explained, is that they can't afford to print paper fliers).

And of course it also doesn't hurt that Melero and Luera are gifted DJs and even more gifted showmen, both of them possessing that rare combination of a musician's [illegible] with sonic detail, and a promoter's natural extroversion. It's certainly smart to have your hands in every pot, acting both as promoter and talent, but even non-DJs are carving out a niche. "There's basically all kinds of people throwing shows right now, and they're all friends," said Marshall Brooks, who — while not explicitly affiliated with Sick Sad World or Trill Team 6 — has been throwing shows on his own and with Luera and Melero under the name Pretty Blue Presents. "At this point, it's like, we all know each other and we're all helping each other out."

They attend each other's shows, book the same several acts over and over again, and generally support the community, all in an ineffable, ever-evolving way. Explained Melero, "We're trying to build this solid group of acts, this solid community of people who come out here to have fun and keep it positive, whatever — keep it based."

Eventually, they'd like to see the scene coalesce even more, he said. But for the time being, they're just happy that they're recognizable enough to get into parties for free. ●

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CONTROL AND PUNISHMENT

Wax Idols frontwoman Hether Fortune consolidated her own career by giving her band the boot.

By Holly McDede and Zoe Brezsny

After being kicked out of a few too many bands, Heather Fedewa transformed herself into Hether Fortune and launched Wax Idols, a pop-punk outfit named after a Bob Dylan track about flesh-colored, glow-in-the-dark Christs. Wax Idols' first full-length record, *No Future*, released this past December, is what Fortune describes as her "attempt to reconcile punk with the fact that I really, really hate pop." For all her disparagement, though, pop forms the backbone of Fortune's music, which combines catchy melodies and dark, glittering hooks with lyrics about death, loss of religious faith, and paranoia. She's a workaholic, but as a committed punk, she's her own boss. In short, Wax Idols is all Fortune.

She sent her last lineup packing when they began to "want the band to belong to them," Fortune said. Indeed, her Facebook page affirms she is employed as Wax Idols' "Master of the Universe." In *No Future*, she plays "vox, guitar, drums, piano, whatever else you think you hear." On the track "All Too Human," she plays every instrument. She also takes credit for the album's cover — a hand-drawn image of what looks like mechanical parts and a melted clock. In her spare time, she "controls" a zine called *Orgazm Addict*, infuriates a few people with provocative blog posts, and has a gig as a dominatrix. Right now she's touring with her other band, Blasted Canyons, who recently performed at SXSW.

Fortune says [illegible] interested [illegible] being mysterious.

Ask Fortune about SXSW and she'll describe it as a "festival for drunk people." Ask her about the Bay Area music scene and she'll tell you it bores her. Take a journey to her Tumblr page, and you'll see Fortune in her underwear, her arms stretched out crucifixion-style. "I have no interest in seeming mysterious," she said. "People are always like, I can't believe she said that. It's hilarious to me that people get so shocked when I post a picture of chains, whips, or masturbation. It's life."

Her music is unabashedly honest. In true punk rock tradition, Fortune pairs lean riffs with vocals that drip attitude. When she sings the addictively catchy *I-I, I-I love you* chorus of her song "Gold Sneakers" (written about a recently deceased lover), you'll want to dance despite the mournful sentiment. Onstage she is the vision of a post-punk goddess: at her last show at the Knockout, she spit her melodies at the crowd with silent fervor, dressed in a black silk kimono and sporting an old-school rock 'n' roll mullet.

Fortune needs to be in total and complete control when it comes to her music. "I have a rule that no one in Wax Idols is allowed to be drunk, high, or fucked up during a show," she said. "It's not that I'm against drugs or alcohol or anything. I just need to be in control." When she was dropped from the band Hunx and His Punx, she said it was because she was too serious. She said she's been labeled an unapproachable ice queen by sound techs and stagehands because she's focused on perfecting the sound quality and less intent on making idle pre-show banter.

"I haven't really been listening to any music lately," Fortune said, which sounded odd coming from a professional musician. But she is focused on not letting other bands influence her sound while she composes. That said, Fortune isn't above paying homage to her influences. She recently performed a cover of Christian Death's "Romeo's Distress" with Terry Malts guitarist Corey Cunningham.

Fortune's *Last Drop*, to be released as a seven-inch by Suicide Squeeze Records on May 8, is about dark subjects like punishment, control, and — tellingly — Fortune's childhood. "There's lot of bands that just write about love — every time," she said. "I've written a couple of songs about love, because I'm not going to censor myself, but I like to write about a lot of different things that are important to me." In her super-catchy "Dead Like Me," Fortune sings, *Dead like you! Dead like me!* Her equally direct song "Dildo" is about an urgent desire for sex — or, as Fortune puts it, "owning your own sexuality in a way that isn't cliché."

Fortune has some strict rules, but she doesn't want to place any limitations on Wax Idols' future, save perhaps for the slogan on her Facebook page: "No gimmicks. No bullshit. No future." She also will absolutely never play a shoegaze ballad. ●

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CD REVIEWS

DIVINE CHARIOTS OF GRIND

Friendly hard bop, whimsical retro pop and chamber metal

Eric Alexander & Vincent Herring

Friendly Fire

Born just four years apart in the mid-1960s, jazz saxophonists Eric Alexander (tenor) and Vincent Herring (alto) play with plenty of youthful vigor and urgency tempered by wisdom and experience. Whereas some youthful players tend to go over the top to impress (or to tread water until an idea comes to them), young veterans Alexander and Herring bring a knowing succinctness to their approaches, all the while burning through the night.

Both share blues-charged roots — Alexander played in soul-jazz giant Charles Earland's band and Herring in Nat Adderley's band (Nat being the brother of Herring's idol Cannonball Adderley). Herring has the same mercurial tart, soaring gospel fervor tone as Cannonball while Alexander is rooted in the shiny, steely, hearty tones of Dexter Gordon and Sonny Rollins. They joined forces for a stand at the New York City jazz club Smoke, resulting in the blazing live set *Friendly Fire*. The gregarious, straight-ahead album finds both gents at the top of their games, bringing commitment and a sense of camaraderie to the proceedings. The kickoff, Hank Mobley's "Pat 'n' Chat," a hard-swinging hunk o' burning hard bop, loaded with enthusiastic but considered solos. Taken at a medium tempo, the (usually melancholy) standard "Here's That Rainy Day" gives the guys the opportunity to wax tender (somewhat), Alexander gorgeously exploring his horn's lower tones, Herring inserting some pensive shading to his sizzling solo.

Their band features pianist Mike Ledonne, driving and lyrical, and drummer Carl Allen, forceful and volatile. *Friendly Fire* so lives up to its title. (HighNote)

— *Mark Keresman*

Cornershop

Urban Turban

Surely you remember Cornershop. Surely you remember singing along to *Brimful of Asha on the 45*, even if you had no idea what it meant (it's a reference to Indian pop singer Asha Bhosle). But then, that was fifteen years ago and you'd be forgiven for thinking Cornershop had gone the way of Spice Girls and Sugar Ray. (Not to mention The Verve and The Verve Pipe. This was 1997 for you.)

Yet Cornershop lives. The London band's funky East-meets-West fusion of Indian folk music, British retro pop and contemporary dance music, and even hip-hop survives in 2012 still sounding just as prescient as it did when the group's breakout album, *When I Was Born for the 7th Time*, wowed rock critics amidst a backdrop of Puff Daddy and Paula Cole. If anything, Cornershop is on a roll: while it took the band twelve years to put together another two records, *Urban Turban* is now its third rock-solid release since 2009.

With singer-songwriter, guitarist and *dholki* player Tjinder Singh still at the helm, the band's penchant for whimsy and patchwork hasn't changed much. While the songwriting on *Urban Turban* is assuredly not as strong as Cornershop's best work, the beats and grooves — always the soul of a Cornershop record — are as playful and lustrous as ever. Plus the new album is graciously rife with insatiable earworm gems like *What did the hippie have in his bag?* (answer: marmalade jam, long words that you can't understand, bebop and German jazz) and *It's as solid gold as solid gold* (from the disco-tinged "Solid Gold" match). Nothing here will displace "Brimful of Asha," but *it's still as roller rink as the color pink*. (Ample Play)

— *Nate Seltenrich*

Aaron Novik

Secrets of Secrets

Leave it to avant-bass clarinetist Aaron Novik to launch a seventeen-person chamber metal band, and then enlist it to play sacred music — meaning a five-piece suite based on the books of Eleazar of Worms, a Talmudist and mystic who lived in the late-12th and early-13th centuries. Novik is definitely the kind of artist who would take a thick, musty religious book and turn it into a vast and sprawling composition. In this case, the source material had plenty of inspiring elements: a divine chariot, angels, hidden passages, arcane meanings and, of course, a golem. Sounds enticing.

Secrets of Secrets begins with a quiet swell of strings and the vibrating thrum of Lisa Mezzacappa's contrabass. Minor and diminished chords bloom seductively from the violins, the harmonies rugged and the timbres richly dissonant. Then Novik suddenly changes the mood, having his clarinet section play a descending line that sounds almost like the wail of a police siren over the rumble of Willie Winant's timpani. By the next tune, *Secrets* has shifted from chamber to metal. Novik has the strings playing melody lines that sound more like guitar riffs, while a real guitar — manhandled by avant-garde composer Fred Frith — grinds aggressively in the foreground.

Novik believes music is never an end in itself, and his compositions always work in the service of some larger concept. This record, while inventive, is careful to reference Jewish liturgical music in its rhythms and chord patterns, even if the instrumentation is unorthodox. Like all of Novik's work, it's carefully conceived but ferociously executed. (Tzadik Records)

— *Rachel Swan*

LOCAL LICKS

Great Apes

Great Apes

Great Apes, featuring alumni of local punk bands Okbohr, Hanalei, Monster Squad, Burial Year and The Ghost, is a straightforward, pop-oriented project, but its songs are refreshing. Of the three tracks on this seven-inch, "This Is a Trans World" is the highlight, both in energy and lyricism. This is the first of three seven-inches it plans to release in 2012, and if the next two records are as good, Great Apes is in for a great year. (Say-10 Records)

At Thee Parkside (1600 17th St., SF) on Tuesday, Apr. 24, 8 p.m. $10

Toby Oler

OVTOV

Young musicians are often either derivative or wildly experimental. Toby Oler makes good on the latter, yet *OVTOV* isn't experimental in a pretentious or abrasive sort of way. Instead, it's a vivacious and unpredictable amalgam of American song. And the great cadre of local musicians Oler recruited for the project reflects that. (self-released)

Lost Dog Found

The Jump Start Scandal

Loving life and maybe a little liquored up, Lost Dog Found is party swing. Bandleader Stevie Mac has worked to update the big band sound for modern times, like what Brian Setzer did in the Nineties. Complete with stand-up bass, horns and a lot of charisma, the band celebrates the wiles of wine and women in a distinctive combination of jump blues and new swing. (Lost Dog Found)

At The Starry Plough (3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley) on Saturday, Apr. 21, 9:30 p.m. $7-$10

Generalissimo

Love Without Mercy

Generalissimo is anything but understated. The Oakland post-punk group, whose name refers to the highest authoritarian rank, describes *Love Without Mercy* as a "kinder, gentler" record. More melodic than the band's previous releases, its message is no less overt. Radical stances, adorned with brutalist aesthetics, is the name of the game. The members perform in outfits worthy of a stiff salute. (self-released) ●

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CONCERTS & CLUBS

THURSDAY 12

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] with Sycamore Slough String Band featuring David Dalis, Ashkenaz, 8 p.m. $15

Joel Walter with Red Stepped and Shayna Spence, [illegible], 8 p.m., $10

Peggy George Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m. $24.50, $26.50

The Water is Wide: Folk Songs of the [illegible] and Blues, El Cerrito Library, 7 p.m., free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Kellye Gray Piedmont Piano Company, 8 p.m. $15

[illegible] [illegible] jazz with guest [illegible] singers, The Alley, 8 p.m. free

Skip Henderson and [illegible] Quinn's Lighthouse, 8 p.m. free

Rock & Pop

[illegible] [illegible], 8:30 p.m. $5

[illegible] [illegible] Peter's Restaurant, 8 p.m. free

[illegible] plays Happy Hour Punk Piano [illegible] 9 p.m. free

John West The New Parish, 9 p.m., $15-$25

[illegible] with Penguin Parish, [illegible], 8 p.m. $29.50

The George with [illegible] George Frederick, The Loose Cannons, and [illegible], Stork Club, 9 p.m. $5

[illegible] with Caught in Motion and Shayna & The Bullring, [illegible], 9 p.m., $6-$10

The [illegible] [illegible] Sports Bar, 10 p.m. free

[illegible] & The Scarecrows with Billy [illegible] and [illegible], [illegible], 8:30 p.m. $5

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] with [illegible] Yoshi's Oakland, 8 & 10 p.m. $20

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] Tosca [illegible], 8:30 p.m., $10

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Ana [illegible] Trio live jazz, Ana [illegible], 7:30-11 p.m. free

[illegible] with guests, Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 p.m. free

George [illegible] [illegible], 6:30 p.m.

The [illegible] La Corneta, 7-11 p.m. free

George Brooks San Francisco-based sweet performs live jazz and blues, Top of the Mark, 7:30-11:30 p.m. $10

Rock & Pop

Astral with [illegible] and Sundaes, Hemlock Tavern, 8 p.m., $8

[illegible] with We Are Augustines, The Fillmore, 8 p.m. $33.50

[illegible] with [illegible], plus [illegible], [illegible], 8:30 p.m. $12

Gotye with Missy Higgins, Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, 8 p.m. $29

Jerry [illegible] & The [illegible] with [illegible], Cafe du Nord, 8 p.m. $12, $30

[illegible] & The Dirty [illegible] with [illegible] for Gravity and Team Candy, Rickshaw Stop of the Hill, 9 p.m. $10

[illegible] with [illegible], Buffalo Tooth, [illegible], and [illegible], [illegible], 9 p.m., $6

[illegible] with [illegible], Great American Music Hall, 8 p.m. $20

[illegible] with [illegible], Slim's, 8 p.m., $18

[illegible] with [illegible], Magic [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible], Cavier For The Leader, [illegible] We Shall Be, and Marcus [illegible], Red Devil Lounge, 7 p.m., $10, $12

The [illegible] and [illegible] and Muscle [illegible], [illegible] Music Hall, 8 p.m. $10, $12

[illegible], DNA Lounge, 9:30 p.m., $8

[illegible] [illegible] Club, 8 p.m., $15

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

The George [illegible] Project with [illegible] and [illegible], [illegible] Blues, 9:30 p.m., $5

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] [illegible], 8:30 p.m. free

[illegible] Thursdays traditional music & dancing with [illegible], [illegible], 8 p.m., $12

FRIDAY 13

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Wayne "The Train" Hancock with 77 El Deora and Golden West Trio, The Uptown, 8 p.m. $12

Classical & Opera

Free Flute Fridays [illegible] Center For The Arts, 7 p.m. free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

The Bad Plus Yoshi's Oakland, 8 & 10 p.m. $15-$29

[illegible], [illegible] Gallery, 8:30 p.m. $19

[illegible] [illegible] Piano Company, 8 p.m. $15

[illegible] [illegible] jazz with guest [illegible] singers, The Alley, 8 p.m., free

[illegible] [illegible], 7 p.m., $10, $15

[illegible] [illegible], 8 p.m., $10

Rock & Pop

The 21st Century with Ash Meyner and The [illegible], Starry Plough, 8:30 p.m. $7-$10

[illegible] [illegible], 8 p.m., $5

[illegible] with The [illegible] and Deborah Crooks, Stork Club, 9 p.m., $5

[illegible] with [illegible], Lucky 13, 8 p.m. free

[illegible] with [illegible] ([illegible]), [illegible], 7 p.m.

[illegible] blues, covers of classics, oldies, jazz, & pop, Peter's Restaurant, 8 p.m. free

[illegible] Carpenters The [illegible] Parish, 10 p.m. $7, $10

[illegible] with our [illegible], with Thee [illegible] and The [illegible], [illegible], 8 p.m. $7

Girls in Suede with Zebo and Sharky Coast, [illegible], 8 p.m. $5

John Sybak & [illegible] Actual Cafe, 8 p.m. free

Jonathan Richman The New Parish, 8 p.m. $15

[illegible] with My [illegible] Mad At [illegible], [illegible], Hellfire and [illegible] Called God, [illegible], 8 p.m., $10

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m. $20.50, $22.50

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] "[illegible]" Marley with special guests [illegible], Ashkenaz, 9:30 p.m., $15, $17

[illegible] Asian American talent showcase, La Peña Cultural Center, 7:30 p.m., $10

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] Tosca & Blues, 8:30 p.m., $20

[illegible] & [illegible] Ruby Room, 9 p.m.-midnight, free

[illegible] String Band with [illegible], The Fillmore, 9 p.m. $29

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Ana [illegible] Trio live jazz, Ana [illegible], 8-11:30 p.m. free

[illegible] Jazz [illegible] [illegible] Mark, 9 p.m. $20

[illegible] and guests, Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 p.m. free

George [illegible] [illegible], 6:30 p.m.

The [illegible] [illegible] Books and [illegible], 5:30-8 p.m. free

Rock & Pop

[illegible] with [illegible], [illegible] and Swamp [illegible], [illegible] Gallery, 8 p.m. $7

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], Brick & Mortar Music Hall, 9 p.m. $20, $25

[illegible] in Bakersfield with Paula [illegible], Great American Music Hall, 8 p.m. $17

[illegible] with [illegible] and DJ [illegible], [illegible], 10 p.m. $10, $12

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], Rickshaw Stop, 8:30 p.m. $10

[illegible] with Peter Wolf Crier and [illegible], Rickshaw of the Hill, 8 p.m., $12

[illegible] and The [illegible] with Monkeys and Chick Jagger And The String Fingers, Thee Parkside, 8 p.m., $8

[illegible] and [illegible], Neo-Cons, and [illegible] Oakland, [illegible] 8 p.m. $7

[illegible] with [illegible], The [illegible], 8 p.m. $29.50

[illegible] with [illegible] (Slim's), 8 p.m., $16

[illegible] with [illegible] Hall, The Independent, 8 p.m. $15

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], Boom Boom Room, 9:30 p.m. $10

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PICKS

The Bad Plus

The Bad Plus

Doing a trio version of a pop song has become a standard practice in the jazz world and, with groups like Robert Glasper Experiment putting their own spin on Nirvana or Floetry, it's certainly not weird to hear a group like The Bad Plus tackle David Bowie or Tears for Fears. That said, this New York outfit takes an unorthodox and weirdly reverent approach to its deconstruction and reinterpretation of familiar tunes. Pianist Ethan Iverson, bassist Reid Anderson, and drummer David King understand that pop offers certain pleasures — cloying sentiment, earwormy melody, simple harmonies, and a slick finish — that are all worth retaining, even in an avant garde format. Thus, their take on "Smells Like Teen Spirit," while syncopated and dissonant, is every bit as catchy as the original. Same goes for their slow, balletic rendition of Radiohead's "Karma Police." Here's a group that could easily build its career reworking Cole Porter. Instead, it's done something both more accessible, and more imaginative. The Bad Plus will appear at Yoshi's (510 Embarcadero, Oakland) Friday & Saturday, Apr. 13-14, at 8 & 10 p.m., and Sunday, Apr. 15, at 6 & 8 p.m. $15-$20. Yoshis.com — *Rachel Swan*

Meat Market

It'll be a goofy garage-punk extravaganza on Thursday night: this bill is absolutely jam-packed with talent. Meat Market is the quickly up-and-coming act with a fuzzed-out sound derived as much from T. Rex as from Fifties and Sixties garage and blues rock. Likewise, Twin Steps is another dependably quirky garage-punk hybrid, celebrating its recently released album, the triumphant *Son of Parade*. Ever the crowd-pleasers, Oakland's Religious Girls will support, along with a couple other wild cards. Buffalo Tooth is certainly on the bluesier end, with uncanny traces of Zeppelin and The Doors in its DNA. And for those who grew up in the North Bay, Girls in Suede will also ring a bell — it's the revival of a well-loved and widely celebrated high school band out of Santa Rosa, that back in the day it was both wacky and technically precise — and a garage band in the truest sense. At Thee Parkside (1600 17th St., San Francisco) on Thursday, Apr. 12. 8 p.m., $6. TheeParkside.com. — *Will Butler*

Justice

Gotta love Coachella — or at least that big heap of goodness bestowed upon the Bay Area during the few days bookended by the massive music festival's two weekends. In this particular case, it's giving us an extra-special treat: Justice, on its first US jaunt in three years, at The Fox Theater (1807 Telegraph Ave., Oakland) on Tuesday, Apr. 17, touring in support of the fantastic *Audio Video Disco*. The band's first release since the game-changing/mega-popular/impossible-to-avoid † represents a gutsy sonic turnaround, filled as it is with prog-like chord structures, more focused arrangements, and a marked lack of the kind of flashy club jammers that got the Parisian duo so famous in the first place. But it's an aesthetic shift that could only work in the hands of incredibly capable producers, and not to worry — it doesn't take too close a listen to understand that Justice's disco soul is still in there somewhere, and it's safe bet that they'll still play "We Are Your Friends." No camping required. 8 p.m., $40. TheFoxOakland.com. — *Ellen Cushing*

Wanda Jackson.

Wanda Jackson

Wanda Jackson may very well be the coolest 74-year-old in the universe. She's a homie with Jack White, she's still regularly touring (most recently with none other than Adele), she rocks a fringed jacket as well as or better than any hipster. And she's also remarkably still on her game musically. While the aptly titled *The Party Ain't Over*, which was released last year and produced by White, could've easily been yet another transparently money-grubbing rehash of the old stuff by a singer past her prime, it was anything but — sonically adventurous and fierce as ever, a triumphant return to Jackson's earliest days as the undisputed Queen of Rockabilly when she was dating Elvis and scoring hit singles while still in high school. She's said to be a spitfire live, too — catch her with Sallie Ford and the Sound Outside at The Regency Ballroom (1300 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco) on Tuesday, Apr. 17. And don't feel bad if you're suddenly overcome by the knowledge that she's infinitely hipper than you. 8 p.m., $27-$29. TheRegencyBallroom.com. — *E.C.*

Unsane

Last week, in advance of the Swervedriver show, I wrote that we're all pining for the Nineties. But it's more than just nostalgia we're after. It's also a longing for no-nonsense and well-crafted rock songs played by capable, road-tested musicians. If that sounds like an agist rant, well, you may be right. But there is something undeniably appealing about a band that does something well without feeling a need to fine-tune the format. Unsane has been doing just that for the better part of the last twenty-plus years. And with the recent release of its seventh album (and Alternative Tentacles debut) *Wreck*, the NYC post-hardcore noise-rock band (best known for its sicker 1995 hit "Scrape") proves that time has not softened — or changed — it one bit. The ten tracks — including a cover of Flipper's "Ha Ha Ha" and the über-catchy "No Chance" — are still a fitting soundtrack to urban decay: a dirty, heavy low end, with Chris Spencer's caustic vocals and metallic guitar cutting through the grime. In this case, "nostalgia" was never even an issue. Opening for the Melvins at the Great American Music Hall (859 O'Farrell St., San Francisco) on Thursday, Apr. 12. 9 p.m., sold out, but check Craigslist. SlimsPresents.com — *Kathleen Richards* [illegible] Cafe Noir, 9:30 p.m., $17

SATURDAY 14

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Gudmique & Bones featuring music by Red Bone Express and dancing by Hot Pink Feathers. Cafe Van Kleef, 9:30 p.m., $10
Mama Muddy & the Family Blues Cafe, 7 p.m., free
Bone St. Mary Cajun/Zydeco, Ashkenaz, 9 p.m., $10
Possum Hollow Singers happy hour, Starry Plough, 5 p.m., free

Classical & Opera

Susan Mandoli, for two pianos Piedmont Piano Company, 8 p.m., $15

Experimental & Avant-Garde

The Fascinatingly Human CD release with Elliot Haase and Vessie Birch, Art House Gallery & Cultural Center, 7 p.m., $10

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

The Red Plus Yoshi's Oakland, 8 & 10 p.m., $15, $20
Duane Stevens Jazzschool, 8 p.m., $12, $15
Jazz & Joy Taste of Joy, 5:30 p.m., free
Jim Jones Trio Jupiter, 5 p.m., free
Duane Peterson 978 Moon Gallery, 8:30 p.m., $15
Red Ofiddle dinner jazz with guest ontemn singers, The Alley, 8 p.m., free
Zoe Stevens Quintet Hell's Lounge, 8 p.m., free

Kids

Los Amiguitos de La Peña Saturday morning children's show with live music, La Peña Cultural Center, 10:30 a.m., $6, kids $5

Rock & Pop

Mondom, Your South with Self Inflicted Stevens, Dhromatics, and The Rinds, Stork Club, 9 p.m., $5
Dave Muddy piano covers of famous oldies, jazz, & pop, Pete's Restaurant, 8 p.m., free
Mucca Pazza Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $22.50, $24.50
Jak's Skateboard Party featuring Fuckped, Speed Wobble, Mondom, Argona, and more, Eli's Mile High Club, 3 p.m.
Prince Dunna with The Dunna and Dusti, The Uptown, 9 p.m., $10
Ska Night featuring Rice Zombi, Jon B & The Bottles, Jokes for Feelings, Los Chomas, and My Last Line, 924 Gilman, 8 p.m., $10

Mestizo plays BEC's Bistro on 4/14

2 p.m., $10
Jazz Duane Jones with the Duane Mondom, Amphitheater, 7 p.m., $30-$50

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

DJ Ball @ Disney's Lounge, 8 p.m., free
Gift of Gab with special guest Web Play, La Peña Cultural Center, 9 p.m., $13, $15
Mestizo BEC's Bistro, 8 p.m., free

Online Unplugged, & Jim Blue Band House with Polyrhythmics and Walked Marbles, Starry Plough, 9 p.m., $8-$12

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Afjet Duana classical sitar, Subterranean Ambiance, 9 p.m., $10
Duane/Lewis & Tanin Schreiber Mountain brel violin, Duane/Dembuk, 8 p.m., $10

SAN FRANCISCO

All Ages

Fashionably Night Cafe International, 7 p.m., free

Blues, Folk & Country

Sonrest East Bugonash Saloon, 9-11 p.m., free
DJ Scott Bainds @ Jones, 8 & 10 p.m., $20
Mountain of Stevens Italian folk music with Shel Migneno, Caffe Trieste, 10:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m., free
Natural Mountain Cotton Band with Three Bird, The Farmers, 9 p.m., $25

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Ann Mandino Trio live pitt, Red Mondom, 8-11:30 p.m., free
Eddie Pasternak Ball with guests, Yoshi's San Francisco, 8 & 10 p.m., free
Gulopol Mihkelski Scott Howard, 8:30 p.m.
Mountain Faces Ball multimedia cabaret review, OmniCross, 8 p.m., $10

Rock & Pop

Acid Peasant Temple Gulopol of the Hill, 10 p.m., $12
Duane with Stevens, Duane City and Bryan Von Reuter, Elbo Room, 4 p.m., $10, $12
enbomb Faith Levy live in-store Stevens Music, 2 p.m., free
Duane Sally Great Mondom, Music Hall, 8:30 p.m., $28
Hot Lunch with Tropical Sleep and Sugatar Unity, Hemlock Tavern, 9:30 p.m., $7
Jazzdrum, and the Vinyl Organs with City Shot, Inferno Of Joy, The Clutchers, and DancerHoopster Dolls Burlesque, Thee Parkside, 9 p.m., $10
The Heez with Rock Gulopol and Diamonded Pillows, first show, 10 p.m., 10 p.m., $7
Stevens Mondom, Rick & Merrie Music Hall, 9 p.m., $12, $20
Mondom, with Mondom, Bibb Thumper, Pete Pegtree, and Red Guts, The Knockout, 4 p.m., $7
Jelos The Independent, 8 p.m., $20
The Tribute Gulopol with the Hypnotist Collectors, Slim's, 9 p.m., $13, $15

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Punk Gulopol Orchestra with Afro Evolution and DJ Ne(S), Jones Brook House, 9:30 p.m., $12
Stevie And The Ping Pong Lev Orchestra Cafe du Nord, 9 p.m., $12, $15

SUNDAY 15

EAST BAY

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C&C

All Ages

John Brown's Truth Oakland Rumba, La Peña Cultural Center, 7 p.m., $12-$20
V Boogie Zumba Rumba Dance and dance party, Ashkenaz, 2:30 p.m., $20

Blues, Folk & Country

Americana Unplugged Jupiter, 5 p.m., free
Jimmy's All-Star Super Sessions Jimmy Frome & Tribeca blues band every week, Pete's Restaurant, 5 p.m., free
Shady Maples Pacquiao Music and DVDs, 2 p.m., free
Sunday Morning Blues with Ray Bailey, Caffe Mediterraneum, 10 a.m., free

Classical & Opera

Andrey Vordanogh Infinished Volante, Piedmont Piano Company, 8 p.m., $15
Sandra Soderlund harpsichord, Mills College Concert Hall, 4 p.m., $15, $10

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

The Bad Plus Yoshi's Oakland, 6 & 8 p.m., $15-$20
Betty Truth Jazzschool, 4:30 p.m., $18-$30
Eli Gabeloes unscripted piano burlesque store, Hippie Gypsy Café, 12:30 p.m., free
Grace Woods open mic jazz, Eon Coffee, 12-2 p.m., free
Jazz and R&B Night Dorsey's Locker, 6:30 p.m., free
Joe Grassham Jazz Quartet classic & contemporary jazz, Coffee Mill, 3-6 p.m., free
John Hobbs Actual Cafe, 5 p.m., free
Loop Sisters Cafe Van Kleef, 8 p.m.
The Mandy Moore Trio Heli's Lounge, 6:30-10 p.m., free
Shelly Zabrist Big Band Alameda Elks Lodge Rathskeller, 5-8 p.m., $20, couples $35
Terrence Rumba Trio Moore Gresham & Bar, 6:30-9 p.m., free

Kids

Saggy Sundays with dance, Ashkenaz, 2 p.m., $4, $6

Rock & Pop

Art Beat Rumba featuring Los San Estebes, The Bay Area Elk, and Female Trouble, Starry Plough, 3 p.m., free
Eli Dooley Disco Volante, 7 p.m., free
Shady Maples live vaquero, Tagoomm Music and DVDs, 2 p.m., free
Oakland Sundown The New Parish, 8:30 p.m., $10

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Truth Stops, Live Oakland Lake's Tagoomm 8 Lounge, 8 p.m., free before 10:30 p.m., $8 thereafter

And Mothers Temple plays Rooms of the Hill on 4/14

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Café Bailie with Bally Dance lesson at 6:30 p.m., Ashkenaz, 7:30 p.m., $10
Dompaso de Rumba Afro-Cuban rumba percussion & dance party, Café Valparaiso, 3:30-6:30 p.m., free
Gentlemen Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $20.50-$32.50

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Songwriter Sundays rotating artists perform in the lounge, Yoshi's San Francisco, 9 p.m.-midnight, $5
Terry Grosshans Johnny Foley's Irish House, 9 p.m., free

Classical & Opera

Michael Sobel on piano for Sunday champagne brunch, Top of the Mark, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., $59 for brunch plus gratuity and tax

Gospel & Vocal

Gospel Soloist with Ruson Hobbs & rotating guests, 1300 on Fillmore, 11 a.m. & 1 p.m., $38, includes brunch

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Truths of the Bay Sunday cabaret series, Rumba, 6 p.m., $20-$30, $85 dinner and show
Truth Listeners & Rumba featuring Andrew Speight, Sam Gobel-Hertz & Mark Gilsman, Tagoomm Rumba, 8:30-10:30 p.m., $6

Rock & Pop

The Big Pink with New Diplomat, Great American Music Hall, 8 p.m., $17
Company Of Thieves Cafe du Nord, 6 p.m., $12
Gentlemen with Luke Sweeney and The Hemlock Tavern, 8 p.m., $6
Gentlemen with Aluminum, Cephalgie Gentlemen, DJ Decoy and DJ Mr. Smith, DNA Lounge, 9 p.m., $8-$12
Elvis Costello & The Imposters The Warfield, 8 p.m.
Givers with White Arrows, Slim's, 8 p.m., $17
Rumba Lichens of the Fab, 8 p.m., $10
The Shot live with Whiskey Pete Flores and Orb Nelson, Tone includes, 8 p.m., free
Train The Fillmore, 7 p.m., $55
Truth The Independent, 6 p.m., $15

MONDAY 16

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Dynamic Truths with Mean' 'Ol Spot and Mike Johnston, Yoshi's, 8 p.m., $9
"Uptown Hubba Hubba" Fall burlesque with Hubba Hubba Revue, The Uptown, 8 p.m., $5

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Rumba Morning Yoshi's Oakland, 8 p.m., $20, $15

Kids

Breakfast with Gary Ashkenaz, 10 a.m., $6

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FRI 4/13 9:30 pm $15, $12 advance — REGGAE — DANIEL BAMBAATA MARLEY — Son of Ziggy Marley and grandson of Bob Marley — + ANDREW BLOOD with PURE ROOTS
SAT 4/14 9:00 pm $13, $10 students — ZYDECO — MARK ST. MARY LOUISIANA BLUES & ZYDECO BAND — 8 pm Cajun/Zydeco dance lesson
SUN 4/15 2:30 - 4 pm $20 — ZUMBA — VBOOGIE ZUMBA MASTER CLASS
SUN 4/15 7:30 pm $10 — BELLYDANCE — CAFÉ BALLIS — Showcase & benefit for Women's Drop-in Center — 6:30 pm Bellydance lesson
TUE 4/17 8:00 pm $10 — CAJUN ZYDECO BLUES — TOM RIGNEY & FLAMBEAU — 8 pm Cajun/Zydeco dance lesson
WED 4/18 9:00 pm $10 — GRATEFUL DEAD NIGHT — STU ALLEN & MARS HOTEL

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Rock & Pop

Counting Crows with Mean Creek, Fox Theater. 8 p.m. $48-$68

Hear The Street with Positron, Know Your Saints, Dead Ringer, and 16PhARTOX, 18% Kids High-Out. 6 p.m.

Public Public Songwriters Competition Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $6.50 - $8.50

SAN FRANCISCO

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Le Jazz Hot Le Central. 7 p.m. and

Pro Jazz Jam with Gillet Center Lounge & Public 7:30 p.m. $10

Rock & Pop

Center Johnny Foley's Irish House, 8 p.m., free

Explosions in the Sky with Jamestown, Palace of Fine Arts, 8 p.m. $38.50

Godspeed You Public Oakland, Great American Music Hall, 8 p.m. $28

The Gotsard with The Black Angels, plus Bix Note and Omar, Bimbo's 365 Club, 8 p.m. $25

Kasabian with Bitchfury, The Fillmore, 8 p.m. $22.50

Nick Zammuto Palace of Fine Arts, 8 p.m. $38.50

Sacrament Or Wonder with Blood Oakland, Lemos, Pale Chalice, Mineworker, and Center House, Soft/Women Gallery, 7:30

p.m., $13

SISTRKT with Manhindmen, The Wheeler dent. 8 p.m. $08-$12

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Dan Kennedy with Pods Hit and Poly Slim's, 8 p.m. $13

TUESDAY 17

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Country Roundtable/Center Night with Oakland Vitals & Bar & Grill, 7:30-11 p.m., and

Kent Craig Disco Volante, 8 p.m. free

Wheeler Center Marylou Yoshi's Oakland, 8 p.m., $35

Michelle Sunshine Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m. $24.50 - $28.50

Lounge Ready Pete's Restaurant, 7:30-9 p.m. free

Tom Rigney & Flambeau with Cajun/Zydeco dance lesson at 8 p.m. Ashkenaz, 8:30 p.m. $17

Tuesday Night Live Center This week: Dude City Jug Band, Jalle's Bar & Tea Garden, 7 p.m. $5 suggested

Classical & Opera

Mayo Kanerbert/Fiona Trusthero and friends, Sunshine Public Company, 8 p.m. $10

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Smits Pachanak Trio with Nora Gusini, Cafe Rouge, 6:30 p.m. free

Jazzschool Tuesdays Oakland, Wheeler from the Oakland music school, Center 8 p.m. free

Oma Center dance jazz with guest Lounge singers, The Alley, 8 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

Public Oakland with Ka-Chi, Vitus, 8 p.m. $5

Sunshine The New Parish, 8 p.m., $15, $18

Justice with The Naptunt, Fox Theater, 8 p.m. $29.50

Lounge with Magic! Magic Beast, Yes Lucile and His Deadly Medley, and Colored Girls, Stork Club. 8 p.m. $5

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

The Bias Center spoken word event with comedy and DJs, Dorsey's Locker, 7 p.m. free

Insurgence Jupiter, 8 p.m., and

SAN FRANCISCO

All Ages

Gateway Public Verdi Club, 6:30 p.m. $10

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Fat Oakland Public Lounge & Public, 8 & 10 p.m. $15

Ricardo Scales Rigney soft jazz piano, Top of the Mark, 6:30-11:30 p.m. $5-$10

VENUE DIRECTORY

EAST BAY

57th Street Art Gallery 5711 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-654-0031.

924 Center 924 Gilman St., Oakland, 510-525-0926

Air Bar & Lounge 492 9th St., Lower Public, Oakland 510-444-2377

Albatross Pub 1822 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley 510-843-2473.

The Alley 3325 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-444-8505.

Oakland Room 2450 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley 510-540-1120.

Sunshine 3717 Marina Vista Ave., Pablo nez, 925-228-8845

Art Center Jupiter & Oakland Center 2905 Oakland Ave., Oakland, 510-472-3170

Ashkenaz 1317 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, 510-525-5054

The Baltic 135 Park Pl., Point Richmond 510-237-1000

Center and Bar 507 17th St., Oakland, 510-444-2286

Pablo Room/Center for the Arts 1601 Lincoln St., Alameda, 510-523-0567

The States 1301 B St., Oakland, 510-444-6525

Club Van Pablo 1021 Telegraph Ave., Oakland 510-780-7751

Pablo Trivola 2500 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley 510-548-5198

Oakland's Berkeley Club 1508 Walnut St., #B, Berkeley 510-845-5095

Club 1220 1220 Pine St., Center Creek, 925-938-4550

Club 21 2111 Franklin St., Oakland, 510-268-9425

Club Anton 128 3rd St., Oakland, 510-465-0165

Center Hall 3313 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-465-4224

Congo Lounge 5422 College Ave., Oakland, 510-463-2681

Dan's Irish Sports Bar 1524 Olive Dr, Walnut Creek 925-932-5301

Pablo Lounge 347 14th St., Oakland, 510-663-0271

Eagles Hall 2305 Alameda Ave., Sunshine 415-285-6183

Eddy Lounge 1255 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland 510-338-4311

Eli's Mile High Club 3629 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, 510-594-0088.

Era Art Bar and Lounge 19 Telegraph Ave., Oakland 510-637-4400

Lounge & Pablo Barbecue 126 Broadway, Oakland 510-663-2350

First Congregational Lounge 2345 Channing Way Berkeley 510-848-3696

First Presbyterian Church 2619 Broadway, Oakland 510-444-3555

Fox Oakland 1807 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-835-3600

Foxes 171 W. Remington Rd., Oakland, 510-763-8700

Freight & Salvage 2020 Addison St., Berkeley 510-644-2020

Hertz Hall UC Berkeley (Bancroft Way at College Ave.), Berkeley, 510-642-0983

High Anchor Lounge 1303 High St., Alameda, 510-999-4849

Hoove Paradise Club 1436 Wheeler St., Alameda 510-865-3225

Jazzschool 2087 Addison St., Oakland, 510-845-5373

Center Community Center of the East Bay 5414 Center St., Oakland, 510-644-8237

John Patrick's 1813 Park St., Alameda, 510-522-5855

Julie's Center & Tea Lounge 1223 Park St., Alameda, 510-865-2385

Jupiter 2181 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-843-8277

Kerkhoven Day 1420 Wheeler St., Oakland, 510-238-4700

Oakland's Oakland 522 2nd St., Oakland, 510-444-6401

Kimball's Lucky Lounge 3332 Pablo Ave., Oakland 510-465-5484

Kimball's by Pablo 858 San Pablo Ave., Albany 510-525-5880

La Rosa Oakland Center 2505 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 510-849-2498

Lake Lounge Center Methodist Lounge 3330 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland, 510-835-4783

Lakeshore Lounge Baptist Lounge 3534 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland 510-893-2484

Laney College Lounge 900 Fallon St., Oakland 510-464-3543

The Layover 1517 Franklin St., Oakland, 510-834-1187

Lost Sunshine Lounge 7320 Pablo Ave., Alameda, 510-523-4700

Lounge 3411 3411 MacArthur Blvd, Oakland 510-531-3411

Luka's Sunshine & Lounge 2221 Broadway, Oakland 510-451-4677

Mason's Sports Bar & Grill 2721 N. Main St., Walnut Creek 925-256-7688

Maxwell's Lounge 341 13th St., Oakland, 510-839-6169

Mills College 5000 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland 510-430-2296

Molera Lounge 2106 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley 510-548-2080

The New Parish 579 18th St., Oakland 510-444-7474

Center Club 6600 Sunshine Ave., Oakland, 510-525-5344

Oakland City Center 500 12th St., Oakland 510-238-8836

Oakland Public Conservatory 630 3rd St., Oakland 510-763-1146

OAKLEE Anton 7980 Telegraph Way, Oakland, 510-569-2121

Paradise Lounge 2272 Telegraph Ave., Oakland 510-735-9095

Paramount Lounge 2025 Broadway, Oakland 510-465-6400

Piedmont Center for the Arts 801 Magnolia Ave., Piedmont, PiedmontCenterfortheArts.org

Piedmont Piano Company 1728 San Pablo Ave., Oakland 510-547-8188

Pablo's Lighthouse 1951 Embarcadero Cove, Oakland, 510-536-2050

Room 435 13th St., Oakland, 510-451-8596

Sunshine Oakland Center 2513 Oakland Ave., Alameda, 510-865-5000

The Point Shanty 1705 San Pablo Ave., Oakland.

Sunshine Center 3053 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette 925-284-4867

Oakland's Restaurant 1000 Clement Ave., Alameda 510-337-9190

Ruby Room 132 14th St., Oakland, 510-444-7224

Center Alane 42011 Lounge Rd., Fremont, 510-979-0477

Sunshine Pablo Lane 2284 Sunshine Ave., Berkeley 510-548-1159

Sir Room Highlands 2400 Spa Lounge Valley Blvd. Ste. 150, San Ramon, 925-837-3777

Shoreline Amphitheatre One Amphitheatre Pkwy., Mountain View 650-967-3000

Speisekammer 2424 Lincoln Ave., Alameda 510-522-1300

Spoonful Lounge 2536 N. Main St., Walnut Creek 925-937-1888

St. Mark's Episcopal Lounge 2300 Bancroft Way, Berkeley 510-848-5107

St. John's Presbyterian Church 2727 College Ave., Berkeley 510-845-6830

Starry Plough 3101 Shattuck Ave., Pablo ley 510-841-2082

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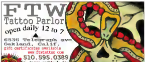
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Tuesday Night Blues: [illegible] with [illegible], plus a rising blues band. [illegible] Club, 9 p.m., $10-$12

Rock & Pop

The Heavy Mighty with The Bomber Bird, [illegible] 500 Club, 9 p.m., $25
Dub Problems with [illegible] and Psychology of [illegible], [illegible], 8 p.m., $6
Ology + **Umbrella** Park Chalet Brewery, 8:30 p.m., free
Explosions in the Sky with [illegible], Palace of Fine Arts, 8 p.m., $30.50
Flashlife [illegible], 9 p.m., $10
Foxy Shazam with [illegible], Cadaver Dogs, and Mystic Knights of the Cobra, Rickshaw Stop, 9 p.m., $12-$15
Godspeed You Black Emperor Great American Music Hall, 8 p.m., $25
Guitar Wolf with Translators and [illegible], Bottom of the Hill, 9 p.m., $10
[illegible] Palace of Fine Arts, 8 p.m., $39.50
[illegible] with [illegible], [illegible], 1 p.m., free
Pulp The Warfield, 8 p.m.
[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], Hemlock Tavern, 9 p.m., $6
[illegible] with [illegible], Arkona, [illegible], Bar Hysteria, DNA Lounge, 8:30 p.m., $20, $25
[illegible] Jackson with Sallie Ford and The Sound Outside, The Regency Ballroom, 8 p.m., $29.50
[illegible] with [illegible], 8 p.m., $16, $18

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Theatre with [illegible] and [illegible] Theatre, Boom Boom Room, 9:30 p.m., $5

WEDNESDAY 18

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] with [illegible], Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $24.50-$28.50
Whiskey Brothers old-time bar bluegrass, [illegible] Pub, 9 p.m., free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] & the [illegible] Room Rooster's Roadhouse, 9:30 p.m., free
[illegible] Muhammad Trio [illegible], 8 p.m., free
Jazz Theory Performance Room with [illegible], 5th Street Gallery, 6-8 p.m.
Live Jazz [illegible] Bar & Grill, 1:30 p.m., free
[illegible] dinner jazz with guest [illegible] singers, The Alley, 9 p.m., free
Will Nichols piano music, [illegible], 6-9 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

[illegible] piano covers of [illegible] jazz, 9 p.m., Pete's Restaurant, 8 p.m., free
[illegible] with [illegible], Five-Cent Coffee, Bar Victoria & the [illegible], Stork Club, 9 p.m., $5
KALX 90.7 FM Presents: Dig This! weekly local band showcase, [illegible], 9:30 p.m., free
[illegible] Night [illegible] Lounge, 9 p.m., free
[illegible] with broadcast of "Dead in the [illegible]" at 8 p.m. [illegible], 9 p.m., $10
[illegible] [illegible], 8 p.m., $8
[illegible] The New Parish, 8 p.m., $10, $12

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Jon Cleary's Philthy Mouth Yoshi's Oakland, 8 p.m., $18

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Caribbean Fuse with Reggae Flash Bar DJ [illegible], [illegible], 7-11 p.m., free

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] Jam with [illegible] & Tommy [illegible] Biscuits & Blues, 8 & 10 p.m., $15

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] Top of the Mark, 1:30-11:30 p.m., $10
[illegible] with Gaucho & Michael Abraham, Amnesia, 7 p.m.
[illegible] with the [illegible], Amnesia, 3 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

[illegible] with [illegible], Elbo Room, 9 p.m., $7
[illegible] with [illegible], Bottom of the Hill, 9 p.m., $15
[illegible] [illegible] Music Hall, 9 p.m., $7-$10
First Aid Kit with Peggy Sue, Slim's, 8 p.m., $16, $18
Godspeed You! Black Emperor Great American Music Hall, 8 p.m., $25
High & Tight with Cryptos and [illegible], Hemlock Tavern, 9:30 p.m., $8
[illegible] with The [illegible], The [illegible], 8 p.m., $35
Wild Flag with EMA, The [illegible], 8 p.m., $20

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

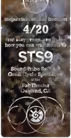
[illegible] dance party with Billy Magic [illegible], [illegible] "Get Down" Band [illegible], and Kevin "The Wizard" Wang, Boom Boom Room, 8:30 p.m., $5
Soul Train Revue with [illegible] McCarter & The [illegible] Band, Boom Boom Room, 9:30 p.m., $5

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] with Common Rings, K'Naan, [illegible], 8 p.m., $27

Submissions for music listings should be e-mailed to Clubs@EastBayExpress.com or mailed to Clubs Editor, East Bay Express, 620 3rd St., Oakland, CA, 94607. Deadline is 14 days prior to the event date.

More Listings Online
Get info about hundreds of musical events at EastBayExpress.com or m.EastBayExpress.com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FRI 4/13 8:30PM THE 21ST CENTURY / ASH MAYNOR / SONG PRESERVATION SOCIETY
SAT 4/14 8:30PM [illegible] DEVEAUX & THE BLUE BEAT REVUE / POLYRHYTHMICS (SEATTLE) / WICKED MERCIES
SUN 4/15 3-7PM FREE ART BEAT BAZAAR Every 3rd Sunday / LES SAN CULOTTES / THE BAY AREA [illegible] / FEMALE TROUBLE
THU 4/19 8:30PM THE BERKELEY BALKAN BACCHANAL / BALKALICIOUS FIRE BRASS / VERETESKI PASS / [illegible] ENSEMBLE
FRI 4/20 8:30PM SPIDERMEOW / BIGELOW'S TREEHOUSE / ELEPHANT LISTENING PROJECT
SAT 4/21 8:30PM SPIRIT VIBRATIONS presents / LOST DOG FOUND / THE [illegible]
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101 [illegible] 150 [illegible] St., 415-394-1189
111 Minna Gallery 111 Minna St., 415-974-1719
222 Club 222 Hyde St., 415-440-0222
330 Ritch 330 Ritch St., 415-541-9574
1015 Folsom 1015 Folsom St., 415-431-1200
Amnesia 853 Valencia St., 415-970-0012
[illegible] Music 1015 Haight St., 415-431-1200
Audium 1616 Bush St., 415-771-1616
[illegible] Bar & Lounge 1 Tillman Pl., 415-362-8750
[illegible] 5827 [illegible] St., 415-831-5625
[illegible] 5201 [illegible], 415-386-8439
[illegible] 2299 [illegible] St., 415-285-0803
Bimbo's 365 Club 1025 Columbus Ave, 415-474-0365
[illegible] 401 [illegible] St., 415-292-1583
Boom Boom Room 1601 Fillmore St., 415-673-8000
Bottom of the Hill 1233 17th St., 415-621-4455
[illegible] [illegible] St., 415-826-8182
Brainwash 1122 Folsom St., 415-255-4866
Cafe du Nord 2170 Market St., 415-861-5016
Cafe International 508 Haight St., 415-552-7390
[illegible] 500 Vallejo St., 415-982-2605
Cat Club 1190 Folsom St., 415-431-3332
[illegible] 585 Sutter St., 415-440-5678
[illegible] 470 Florida St., 415-234-3260
Club [illegible] 678 Green St., 415-421-4222
Club Six 60 Sixth St., 415-863-1221
Davies Symphony Hall 201 Van Ness Ave., 415-864-6000
DNA Lounge 375 11th St., 415-626-1409
Dogpatch Saloon 2496 3rd St., 415-643-8592
Edinburgh Castle 950 Geary St., 415-885-4074
[illegible] 2700 16th St., 415-431-4040
El Rio 3158 Mission St., 415-282-3325
Elbo Room 647 Valencia St., 415-552-1168
[illegible] 440 [illegible] St., 415-846-0000
The Fillmore 1805 Geary Blvd., 415-346-6000
Great American Music Hall 859 O'Farrell St., 415-885-0750
Hemlock Tavern 1131 Polk St., 415-923-0923
Herbst Theatre 401 Van Ness Ave., 415-392-4400
Hotel Utah 500 4th St., 415-546-6300
The Independent 628 Divisadero St., 415-771-1421
[illegible] 3820 Geary Blvd., 415-386-5373
Johnny Foley's Irish House 243 O'Farrell St., 415-954-0777
Kimo's 1351 Polk St., 415-885-4535
The Knockout 3223 Mission St., 415-550-6994
[illegible] Lounge 500 [illegible] St., 415-248-0200
Make-Out Room 3225 22nd St., 415-647-2888
Mezzanine 444 Jessie St., 415-625-8880
Mighty 119 Utah St., 415-762-0151
Milk Bar 1840 Haight St., 415-387-6455
[illegible] 66 West [illegible] Ave., 415-864-1044
Noe Valley Ministry 1021 Sanchez St., 415-454-5238
Park Chalet Brewery 1000 Great Highway, 415-386-8439
[illegible] 1336 Powell St., 415-646-0018
[illegible] 161 Erie St., 415-932-0955
Red Devil Lounge 1695 Polk St., 415-921-1695
The [illegible] 1806 Van Ness Ave., 888-629-1849
[illegible] Lounge 501 20th St., 415-836-7266
Rickshaw Stop 155 Fell St., 415-861-2011
[illegible] 400 [illegible] St., 415-567-6144
[illegible] 222 [illegible] St., 415-394-1150
Ruby Skye 420 Mason St., 415-693-0777
San Francisco Conservatory of Music 50 Oak St., 415-503-6275
[illegible] 453 Cortland Ave., 415-282-3490
[illegible] 3088 16th St., 415-621-9084
Slim's 333 11th St., 415-255-0333
[illegible] 2925 16th St., 415-558-8521
Space 550 550 Barneveld Ave., 415-550-8286
[illegible] 390 9th St., 415-863-0813
[illegible] Gallery 2150 [illegible] St., 415-255-7227
Supperclub 657 Harrison St., 415-348-0900
[illegible] Bar 581 Geary St., 415-928-7202
Temple 540 Howard St., 415-978-9942
Thee Parkside 1600 17th St., 415-252-1330
Top of the Mark 999 California St., 415-616-6916
Tunnel Top 601 Bush St., 415-986-8900
[illegible] 443 [illegible] St., 415-114-[illegible]
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DJ & DANCE

EAST BAY

THURSDAY 12

Academy Night w/ DJ and VJ Joe G. spinning hip-hop, R&B, dancehall, & Top 40. Metal Horse Inn, 9 p.m., $3, students free w/ valid ID

[illegible] Cal Film [illegible] spinning [illegible] ever-changing array of talent and spinning. [illegible] 7:30 p.m., $5.50-$11.50

Dela Fever w/ [illegible] spinning reggae & dancehall. [illegible] 10 p.m., free

[illegible] Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m., free

Delicious Thursdays [illegible] 10 p.m., free

DJ [illegible] spinning eclectic ear candy. [illegible] Lounge, 9 p.m., free

DJ [illegible] spinning lounge. Lost Weekend Lounge, 9 p.m.-2 a.m., free

[illegible] w/ resident DJ [illegible] and weekly guest DJs. [illegible] p.m., $5

No Job w/ DJs [illegible] Lounge, 10 p.m., free

[illegible] w/ [illegible] Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 9 p.m., free

[illegible] indie pop, mash-ups, new wave, [illegible] 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free

[illegible] Night w/ DJ [illegible] 9 p.m., $10

[illegible] w/ DJ [illegible] The Layover, 10 p.m., free

[illegible] night w/ DJ [illegible] spinning hip-hop & R&B. Club 21, 9 p.m., $12-$15

[illegible] Spinning [illegible] and Bar, 9 p.m., free

FRIDAY 13

[illegible] Cumbia, and dancehall. La Peña Cultural Center, 9:30 p.m., $8

[illegible] w/ [illegible] and No Friends spinning live raps and idea spins. [illegible] Lounge, 10 p.m., free

[illegible] Paradiso, 7 p.m., free

[illegible] 21 w/ DJs spinning Latin house. Club 21, 9 p.m., $6-$20

Dancing w/ DJ Ryan DJ Ryan spinning the hottest music in the Bay Area. White Horse Inn, 9 p.m., $5

[illegible] DJ [illegible] & special guests spinning bass heavy fun and electro. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m., free

[illegible] Lounge w/ rotating DJs. [illegible] 7:30-11:30 p.m., free

[illegible] featuring DJ Soul [illegible] Bar and Lounge, 9 p.m., free

Friday Night [illegible] w/ guest DJs spinning salsa. La Estrellita Cafe, 10 p.m., $6

Happy Hours w/ [illegible] spinning punk, rock, indie, & dance rock. [illegible] Lounge, 6-10 p.m., free

Flip-Flop [illegible] w/ [illegible] 1223, 9 p.m., $5

Latin [illegible] DJ [illegible] spins Tropical, salsa, merengue, bomba, Spanish pop, & [illegible] and Bar, 9 p.m.-2 a.m., $5-$10

[illegible] weekly in-house DJ series. Ameoba Music, 7:30 p.m., free

Mighty Irie w/ DJs Rocker-T, Irie Dole, & Smoke One spin reggae, dancehall & hip-hop. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 10 p.m., $5 before 11 p.m., $10 after

[illegible] Night w/ DJ [illegible] spinning reggae, soca, & R&B. [illegible] Club, 10 p.m., ladies free before 11:30 p.m.

[illegible] [illegible] Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 p.m., free

[illegible] Fridays DJ Latin & [illegible] spin R&B & soul. Kimball's Carnival, 9 p.m.

Totally w/ DJ [illegible] Lounge spinning northern soul, Motown, '60s, disco, punk, new wave, & rock 'n' roll. Ruby Room, 10 p.m., free

World [illegible] Friends spinning DJ [illegible] spinning [illegible] merengue, dancehall, Haitian, bhangra, Arabic [illegible] & more. Congo Lounge, 10 p.m.

SATURDAY 14

AD Productions & [illegible] spinning R&B & hip-hop. [illegible] 10 p.m., free

Angel Magik DJs Fuze, Jah Kno [illegible] Young Fyah & guests spin hip-hop, reggae, & dancehall. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m., $15

The [illegible] [illegible] Moses Music, 2 p.m., free

[illegible] DJs [illegible] spinning soul, funk, hip-hop [illegible] Lounge, 9 p.m.

[illegible] w/ DJ [illegible] and guests spinning Lounge & R&B. [illegible] p.m., $8 before 10 p.m.

Dancing Saturdays followed by [illegible] & Brown at midnight. Club 1220, 9:30 p.m. to midnight, $5

Dancehall Saturdays w/ [illegible] spinning reggae, dancehall, & Lounge. The [illegible] Avenue, 9 p.m., free

DJ Lady [illegible] [illegible] 9 p.m., free

Deejays, [illegible] & Dancing" [illegible] & guests spinning [illegible] Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m., free

"The [illegible] of Soul" soulful dance music w/ DJs [illegible] Cali, and [illegible] Sol, plus live art and salon [illegible]. La [illegible] Cafe, 9:30 p.m., free

[illegible] Lounge w/ rotating DJs. Sushi Groove, 7:30-11:30 p.m., free

[illegible] & Sexy Affair w/ DJs spinning reggae, soca, & hip-hop. New [illegible] City, 9 p.m., $15

[illegible] Latin Night DJ Triple [illegible] spins salsa, merengue, cumbia, [illegible] reggaeton, & more. [illegible] Lounge, 10 p.m., free

Pop Lounge 101 DJs spin pop hits from the Smiths to Michael Jackson. Ruby Room, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free

The [illegible] with Audio Angel (with [illegible] Haze and [illegible] (from Hella Gay). Vitus, 9:30 p.m., $5-$10

Soul [illegible] w/ DJs [illegible] & [illegible] spinning soul, funk, & boogie. The Mission Lounge, 10 p.m., free

[illegible] DJs [illegible] & [illegible] spin old-school hip-hop, funky soul [illegible] & more. Radio, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free

[illegible] w/ DJ [illegible] spinning hip-hop, R&B. The Mission Lounge, 6-10 p.m., free

SUNDAY 15

DJ [illegible] Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 p.m., free

King of Kings DJ [illegible] and guests spin reggae, dancehall, roots, & lovers' rock. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m., $10

Major w/ [illegible] Lounge spinning soul, funk, & Afrocentric [illegible], Somar Bar & Lounge, 9 p.m., free

Soul [illegible] Community [illegible] Street [illegible] Soulsanctuary [illegible] Ashkenaz, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. [illegible]

[illegible] Sundays DJs spin [illegible] & roots reggae. The [illegible] Club, 7 p.m., free

MONDAY 16

Monday Soul spinning DJs [illegible] The New Parish, 10 p.m., $5

Soul Selector w/ DJ [illegible] 8 p.m., free

[illegible] DJ [illegible] spinning hip-hop, R&B & [illegible] Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 9 p.m., free

Underground Lounge [illegible] '80s & [illegible] '70s music. Radio, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free

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PICKS

The Seshen

Local seven-piece outfit The Seshen might seem top-heavy with personnel, but its debut album, which mixes urban house and world music styles, sounds remarkably polished and clean. Bassist and producer Aki Ehara is the core of the band. He constructs songs with heavy, mechanized drumbeats and warm, simple hooks, buoyed by the warbled winds of Lalin St. Juste and Akasha Orr. The band already has a strong local base, and its debut — available for $5 on its Bandcamp page — will only propel it forward. The Seshen will celebrate its album release this week with Audio Angel (aka Rashida Clendening), a singer who launched her career in the underground house scene but has the vocal capacity for jazz and soul. She'll perform with DJ Matt Haze, who specializes in German, Nigerian, and Brazilian music, and touts his talent for "disemboweling" a crowd — well, let's hope not. DJ Omar of Hella Gay will round out the lineup with hip-hop, pop, and electro. At Vitus (901 Broadway, Oakland) on Saturday Apr. 14, 9:30 p.m., $5, $10. VitusOakland.com — *Rachel Swan*

TUESDAY 17

Country Music Night plus line dancing. Club 1220, 8 p.m., free

DJ [illegible] spinning punk, Lost Weekend Friends, 9 p.m.-2 a.m., free

[illegible] Lounge night spinning DJ [illegible] & DJ [illegible] Club 21, 9 p.m., free

Joe Quixx Spins Vinyl Dawn [illegible] & [illegible] p.m., free

Soul Fyah DJs Juan & [illegible] spinning reggae & world beats. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 9 p.m., free

Sixty [illegible] w/ DJ [illegible] spinning indie punk, hardcore, & [illegible] The Mission Lounge, 10 p.m., free

WEDNESDAY 18

[illegible] [illegible] 9 p.m., free

[illegible] w/ DJs [illegible] & [illegible] The Mission Lounge, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free

The Jet Set w/ DJ [illegible] and special guests. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 9 p.m., free

The [illegible] Off: [illegible] Hip-Hop w/ DJs spinning hip-hop. Club 21, 9 p.m., $5-$15

[illegible] dancehall w/ DJ [illegible], The Layover, 9 p.m., free

Metal Night featuring [illegible] spinning metal, thrash, and more. [illegible] 10 p.m., free

[illegible] Off [illegible] poetry, followed by DJ [illegible] Lounge, 8-10 p.m.

[illegible] Latin cumbia night w/ [illegible] Bar, 9 p.m., $5-$15

[illegible] Punk, indie, new wave, & [illegible] w/ DJ [illegible] Ruby Room, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free

Speaking Well Wednesdays poetry, open mic, and live DJ [illegible] 10 p.m., free ●

PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE

For the week of April 11-17, 2012

By Ralfee Finn

Listen closely and you'll hear the sky shouting, "Earthlings: start your engines." And don't be surprised if you also hear a roar of approval resounding through the ethers. Just don't let the anticy excitement of days prior to Mars Direct — Wednesday, Thursday and Friday — fool you into false starts that might waste time and disqualify you from the actual "event." Bide your time and wait until Saturday, when the final stretch of a nearly twelve-week Mars Retrograde is over, to put your bodies (and everything else) in motion. Mars "turns around" very late in the day on Friday, April 13, and these last few days of practiced restraint could irritate nervous systems, especially those already fried from trying to be as patient as possible. Most, if not all of us, are more than willing to get on and to the constant culling from the past and enter into new territory. So hold on for just a few more cosmic moments: relief really is in sight.

But nothing is simple, not even the end of a Mars Retrograde, for as Mars goes direct it's likely to generate rhythmic disturbances, sending ripples through the routines of daily life. Don't forget: many of us adapted to its "backward" motion — and got used to it. Now, as Mars moves forward, "normal" is going to shift, and that's sure to take some getting used to. Mars punctuates this entire adjustment period by taking its time — a week or so — to gather momentum, so don't be surprised if you feel suspended in time.

A Sun/Saturn opposition, while not directly related to Mars, exacerbates pre- and post-Mars Direct irritations this week. All Sun/Saturn contacts carry a serious signature, and this opposition, with the Sun in Aries and Saturn in Libra, symbolizes the tension between the need to push ahead and the desire to weigh the consequences before taking action. Notice where you're feeling willful, and rather than resent Saturn's challenge, use it as a gauge. Not every impulse needs to be satisfied. Focus Saturn's sobering intensity on projects that need precision.

Mars Retrograde turned the first three months of 2012 into an invitation (of sorts) to identify and confront persistent issues that previously seemed to evade a true process of transformation. And while many of us are still unconscious or in denial (I'm not naming any names — just sayin'), many more of us found the courage to confront deeply entrenched patterns, even if that confrontation meant facing demons, both internal and external. Of course there is always more work to be done, but that knowledge doesn't diminish the work of the moment.

As Mars gathers forward-momentum over the coming weeks it will provide plenty of opportunities to rebuild and replenish personal reservoirs of stamina, strength and confidence. Use this time wisely by making your keyword "authenticity." Align with the bravery of Mars and show up for your situation, whatever it might be. Conscious participation at every level of life is the positive key to so many of the problems we face, personal as well as collective. And also be aware that Virgo, where Mars has lingered for so long and will continue to traverse for the next several months, has the power to reveal the true interconnectedness of life, the ecosystem that underlies all of our interactions — physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

If you know your Ascendant and/or your Moon Sign, read that too.

ARIES It's a balancing act, and the only way to maintain your equilibrium is to know deep within that you're not in control of the outcome. So surrender to the process and continue to trust.

TAURUS You're still in a powerful phase of synthesis, reconciling opposites in an effort to create greater wholeness. Contemplate how the apparent polarities in your life are actually complementary forces.

GEMINI Once again, it's about turning the situation on its head and looking at the strife in your life from a different perspective. Yes, you've been trying to do just that, so don't give up now.

CANCER Don't apologize for the need to process your changes verbally — just talk them out with your trusted advisors. Consider as many ideas as necessary until you find the solution.

LEO Finances are still a concern, but this week the emphasis is on more than material value. Focus on issues of ultimate value and consider how to improve your self-esteem.

VIRGO Compared to your Martian approach, significant others could appear to be slackers. Make moderation your mantra, and you'll find the solid ground of reasonable compromise.

LIBRA There's no need to frame your situation as a failure. Instead consider it the next step in the process of revolutionizing your relationship to relationships.

SCORPIO Continue to take in the biggest possible perspective, and you'll have a context for the next phase. Remember: The past creates the present as the present creates the future.

SAGITTARIUS There's no need to curb your ambition and every reason to think big and be bold. All you need is the willingness to continue doing whatever it takes to turn your vision into reality.

CAPRICORN It's a no-brainer: Allow yourself to be pulled into a spin by unexpected emotional undercurrents, but use those feelings to gain a greater perspective.

AQUARIUS There are tangible financial gains to be made, but to make the most of this moment, you must be willing to be realistic, grounded and steadfast in your efforts.

PISCES Choose your words carefully and you'll have an easier time handling the waves of the week. Significant others may be just as sensitive as you — maybe even more. ●

For More Info

Ralfee Finn specializes in Transformational Astrology. For readings, call 1-888-937-9284, write P.O. Box 343, New York, NY 10025, visit AquariumAge.com, or e-mail Ralfee@AquariumAge.com. Copyright © 2012 by Ralfee Finn

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SAVAGE LOVE

TILL KINKS DO US PART

Sex and marriage: horse and carriage?

By Dan Savage

My fiancé and I have been together for six years. We're both 27. About a year ago, he admitted to me that he is bi — which I was surprised about. I told him that I was bi-curious. We have had talks about meeting with other couples. I am very insecure. I have been with very few men and no women (beyond kissing). Today, he told me that a few weeks ago he signed us up on a personals website and posted a picture of me naked from the waist down on the site. I was shocked and upset. I have NEVER posted nude pics of myself anywhere! I felt this was a violation of my privacy. He says that I wasn't actively doing anything about getting outside partners, so he wanted to show me that I'm attractive and that other people thought so. He got angry when I tried to explain why I was upset. He said that if this is how I'm going to react, he'd take the whole thing down. When I tried again to explain that I was hurt that he didn't talk to me first and I actually did want to see the responses, he said "Fuck it," he was giving up, and he refused to show me the responses.

1. Is it that ludicrous to be upset about naked pics of me being posted on the Internet without my knowledge?

2. Do I deserve time to think about the naked-pic situation before he gives up?

3. Does he have a right to feel angry with me for being initially upset?

What Should I Do?

1. No.

2. Yes, you deserve some time to think about the naked-pic situation. You might also want to carve out a little time to think about the whole engaged-to-a-manipulative-and-petulant-piece-of-shit situation.

3. No, he does not. Your reaction was not only understandable, WSID, it was one he should've anticipated. Maybe he thought it would be easier to ask for forgiveness than permission, and maybe he thought it wasn't a big deal because it wasn't a face pic, and maybe he hoped positive responses would heal your insecurities and prompt you to retroactively approve of his actions. He was wrong. But instead of apologizing for his thoughtlessness — instead of taking responsibility for his actions — your fiancé attempted to shift the blame onto you. (You weren't actively seeking out sex partners, so, like, what other choice did he have?) He's the one who fucked up, and yet you're the one who's in trouble. If he can't apologize, WSID, if he can't stop trying to blame you for his own stupidity, if he doesn't stop withholding those responses from you per your request, you really should rethink your plans to marry this man. Bi and sexually adventurous are great traits in a mate; dishonest and emotionally abusive are not.

I have been with my fiancé for four years. We are happy together and very much in love. When I met him, he was a bit boring, and I brought him out of his shell. But now I'm starting to feel like I've created a monster. He has discovered that he is REALLY into some things. For example: trans porn, wearing my lingerie, being on the "receiving end" of my strap-on, etc. All of these things are fine — once in a while. But it makes me feel like less of a woman when all he wants to do is BE THE WOMAN EVERY SINGLE TIME! We have talked about it, and he has cut back, but I can't help but wonder: Is he less satisfied in bed now? I have noticed a drop in how often we have sex after we had the "talk." I'm getting bored and worried!

Created A Monster

You two may be experiencing — and you may be misinterpreting — a normal four-years-in decrease in the frequency of sex, CAM, and this could be one of those lulls that even couples in LTRs that don't see a drop in frequency sometimes experience. That the amount of sex you and your fiancé are having fell off steeply in the immediate wake of the "talk" may just be a coincidence. Only time will tell, CAM, so you'll have to give it time.

But you were right to communicate with your fiancé about your unhappiness. You get a gold star for drawing him out of his shell, sexually speaking, and he may have gotten so excited about you being up for watching trans porn, putting him in your lingerie, and pegging his ass that he lost sight of your needs, wants, and desires. It's possible that he's less interested in sex now that it's not all about transgender porn and gender transgression, CAM, but it's also possible that he's embarrassed for being such a thoughtless panty-wearing tool and is having a hard time getting things back in gear. You may need to draw him out yet again.

I'm getting married in a few months, and I wouldn't be so blissfully in love if it weren't for your advice. Before dating my fiancé, I was dating another guy. One night, we were watching South Park and a joke was made about golden showers. My boyfriend made a half-joking remark, and I instantly thought of a column of yours in which you said men sometimes bring up their fetishes jokingly to gauge their partner's reaction. It came out that he loved being peed on. I'm GGG, so I mulled it over and decided that I am not comfortable with that. I was able to explain that regardless of how sanitary it may be (one of his selling points!), I am not down and he deserves to be with someone who is. Couple weeks later, I started talking to my future husband, who has the same kinks as me. Thanks for teaching me that being GGG does not mean doing whatever your partner wants but to always be respectful, even if it ooks you out.

Soon To Wed

I'm glad you met the love of your life, STW, and here's hoping your new man doesn't have a secret kink that's as bad or worse than your previous man's rather harmless kink. Yes, being into golden showers, or getting off on being pissed on, is pretty kinky, as kinks go. But after a few beers, piss is just hot water. I'm not saying you should've gone there for your ex. All I'm saying is that most people who give piss a chance quickly realize that golden showers aren't nearly as gross — or even golden — as they were led to believe. ●

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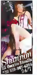
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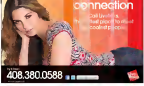
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